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## The Hotels of Old Point Comfort: A Material Culture Study

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**The Hotels of Old Point Comfort: A Material Culture Study**

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A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Anthropology

The College of William and Mary

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

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by

Winifred R. MacIntosh

1990

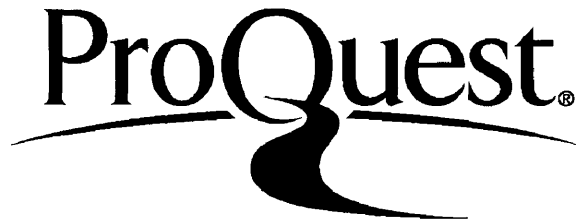
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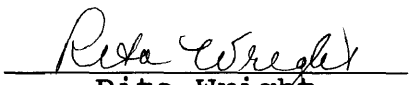
APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

  
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## Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Joseph and Nancy Wilson.

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## Abstract

As objects of material culture, the hotels of Old Point Comfort are examined through aspects of their physical being, context, and usage. Material culture evidence is integrated with documentary evidence in examining who used and occupied the hotels, when and why they changed hands, why they were unusual, as well as the materials, construction, and architectural design. This approach establishes the hotels' historical context and it is learned what preceded each and how that influenced its successor. In addition, the material systems of the hotels are identified. The extreme complexity of these networks of interactions is revealed and integrated into the framework of the national resort culture. As a result, factors emerge whose examination leads to conclusions concerning the present hotel's dependency upon the past for survival.

The Hotels of Old Point Comfort study presents a single building at a given point in time as an object of inquiry. An attempt is made to examine each hotel building within its whole social context in order to demonstrate how objects may outlive their prime meaning, lose their connotation, yet

remain as lingering symbols. In addition, the relatively long span of time covered by the study allows the capability of identifying and communicating transforming influences. The dramatic extent to which each hotel was influenced by the advancements in technology and transportation, as well as social change, plays an especially powerful role. The study provides insights as to the adoption and spread of singular innovations which by gaining popular acceptance emerge as national trends and eventually are incorporated into culture. This process is exemplified by the resort phenomenon, a central theme of the study.

The Hotels of Old Point Comfort study demonstrates the vast amount of cultural information which can be revealed in a study of a building. It adds to our understanding of cultural dynamics, the processes of adaptive usage, as well as demonstrating how objects may become symbols of something quite different than what they actually are. In addition, the study adds to the large body of empirical data which serves to document a culture and which itself forms a facet of material culture.



## **The Hotels of Old Point Comfort: A Material Culture Study**

## Introduction

Hampton Roads is formed by the emptying waters of three rivers, the James, the Nansemond, and the Elizabeth. From the Chesapeake Bay, the entrance to the road is marked by a finger of land formed by alluvial deposits of sand from these rivers. This strategic location, called Old Point Comfort, invited an early military occupation. Also occupying the site was a succession of four hotels that exhibited characters quite different from that of the adjacent military installation, although their histories are closely entwined.

The presence of hotels of Old Point Comfort seems curious as one considers their location on a United States military reservation. However, when the factors influencing their development are taken into account, their presence is really not so peculiar.

The last of the four hotels, the Chamberlin Hotel, today occupies a locality immediately adjacent to Fort Monroe on Old Point Comfort. Built on the water's edge, the hotel's silhouette was once the first landfall seen as one made an approach from the Chesapeake Bay. Today, in most cases, the structure forms an impression as one crosses the Hampton

Roads Bridge Tunnel. The Chamberlin Hotel, with its nine stories in contrast to the low storied buildings of Fort Monroe, presents itself as an anomaly. However, as the following study contends, the Chamberlin Hotel is not just an object frozen in time but rather a symbol of something much greater than the physical structure itself.

This concept is further addressed in Chapter 1 which provides a discussion of the definition, development, and contributions of the analysis of material culture. The research potential of buildings as objects of study and the inclusion of various types within this realm is considered. Though material culture studies of such type are rare, several are specifically examined.

The individual histories of each of the four hotels of Old Point Comfort comprise Chapter 2. The historical context of the hotels is related through an examination of the sequence of events or circumstances responsible for the changing role and meaning of the structures. These histories reveal major concerns in the investigation of buildings such as who occupied them, how they were used, when and why they changed hands, as well as unusual characteristics they may possess. Additionally, construction, materials, and architectural design is reviewed.

Bibliographic sources are used to establish the general history of the vicinity. In determining what influences are reflected in the material culture of the hotels, photographs

have been relied upon, although many of the features of the hotel were not recordable. Government, military, county, and state documents as well as newspapers and periodicals of the time period have been used as primary sources.

In 1979, Brett Burkhart recieved a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to pursue a project which resulted in a slide and lecture presentation on the Old Point Comfort hotels. His extensive research included the National Archives (Record Group 77), the Maryland Historical Society, the Virginia Historical Society, and personal interviews. Information gained from Burkhart's assemblage of materials is cited throughout the text as the Burkhart Collection.

Chapter 3 draws parallels between the hotels of Old Point Comfort and the national development, reign, and decline of resorts. The predominant factors responsible for these occurances are cited as subheadings. These influencing factors and their corresponding changes in the material culture of the Old Point Comfort hotels are discussed as relationships between fashion, values, attitudes, class, economic trends, architectural styles, and patronage are revealed .

In the Conclusion and Summary it is established that the hotels of Old Point Comfort were molded by the changing values and ideas of the national resort culture, as well as by their relationships with the local area. At times these factors

both enabled and threatened the survival of the hotels. It is these factors which influenced the physical and functional transformation of the present Chamberlin Hotel. Additionally, it is concluded that the fame gained by the three early hotels has contributed to the survival of the current hotel structure which in turn stands as a monument to the legacies of those predecessors.

## Chapter I

### Material Culture and Buildings

Between the natural environment and the human sector lies the material which, as a function of both, serves to document the culture. In 1871, Tylor was the first to refer to this material as "material culture" which has become the accepted term to refer to the material aspect of a culture. Material culture was not defined by Tylor but various definitions have since been formulated. Wissler (1935:520), stated simply that material culture is human material possessions. Quimby and Harrison (1966:1054) were more specific: "Material culture consists of tools, weapons, utensils, machines, ornaments, art, buildings, monuments, written records, religious images, clothing and any other ponderable objects produced or used by humans." While there is general agreement that material culture refers to the tangible elements of a culture made and used in human society, refinements of the definition continue. As suggested by Reynolds (1987:155) material culture is "the tangible phenomenon of a human society that are purposive products of learned patterns that are not instinctive." Prown (1982:1) however, refers to the term as "the study through

artifacts of the beliefs - values, ideas, attitudes, and assumptions - of a particular community or society at a given time." "Material Culture" as a subject is absent from the fifteenth edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica and instead finds definition under "Folk Arts." There it is defined as the polar opposite from oral tradition, a term used to denote physical objects produced in traditional ways (1985:306). It seems that the diversity of definitions of material culture is equated only by the diversity of the studies themselves.

From the 1920's until the 1970's the field of anthropology often ignored the study of material culture, giving greater attention to sociological and ideological aspects in its search for an understanding of cultural behavior. Material culture was the domain of archaeologists and museums, intent on recovery and collection. There was a lack of defined goals and a narrow perspective of the objectives of material culture studies. The isolation of museums from mainstream anthropological theory further weakened material culture research. As such, contributions in this area represented uncoordinated responses to the need for scholarly examination of material culture and as such, were largely dismissed or ignored (Reynolds 1987:156).

Although cultures differ in the type, quantity, and complexity of their material culture, a relationship between those who made, envisioned, used, or perhaps discarded the objects and the actual objects themselves is apparent.

Objects are cultural statements that reflect the ideas, beliefs, and values of people. When these aspects are studied over time, changing patterns of behavior can be identified. This had long been recognized by the archeologist, though it was assumed by many that archaeology was concerned explicitly with the recovery of ancient material through excavation. Yet this assumption is a fallacy. In fact, for the archaeologist most contributions lie in the analysis of material culture, in attempting to explain why things were made, why things took the forms they did, and what social, functional, aesthetic or symbolic needs they serve (Schlereth 1982:3). Furthermore, material capable of yielding information need not be ancient, need not be covered with dirt and, therefore, need not require excavation to learn this information.

With the realization that analysis, not simply collection, was the key, there was a shift from the early purely taxonomic and technological studies of material culture as the research domain was redefined and expanded. Furthermore, as the field of anthropology became interested in symbolism, material culture and its potential as a medium of visual communication was recognized (Stott and Reynolds 1987:2). The contributions of material culture studies to the general understanding of a society and culture have been slow in gaining recognition. However, the acceptance of material culture studies within the field of anthropology has not diminished their multi-disciplinary usage.



Aspects of the object, the context of the object, and the object's process of manufacture and use have been identified by Stott (1987:14) as three areas whose examination serve to focus the anthropological approach of material culture studies. These "tools" may be used to examine an object at present or combined with the element of time to reveal change. As recognized by Stott, the tangible physical properties of the object of study are of course important. However, as a developing sub-discipline of anthropology, material culture studies have moved beyond description to emphasize the contextualization of the object. Placing the object in its cultural perspective and exploring its importance and meaning to the society in terms of associated ideas, beliefs, and behaviors reveals the object's social and cultural context. An examination of the elements of an object's social and cultural context, physical, and aesthetic properties, environment and other objects with which it co-exists can lead to a relatively comprehensive understanding of the object. In addition, the process of its manufacture and usage should not be ignored (Stott 1987:28).

The technological processes of manufacture and usage as well as the behaviors and other factors constituting the context of an artifact are clearly related although they are not part of the material culture. Objects do not exist in isolation and in study should not be isolated from other cultural aspects nor from each other. Instead material and

non-material aspects and their interaction should be considered together. In this way, the whole network of interaction which surrounds a material item is revealed. This complex interrelationship has been termed "material system" (Reynolds 1987:156).

Citing large structures such as a factory, hospital or museum, to illustrate his point, Reynolds provides an example of a complex material system. Though the building itself and its associated items constitute the material culture, there is a strong continual interaction with human ideas and behavior, forming the material system. This suggests that in actuality, the study of the material system, of which material culture is the core, is the objective of material culture studies (Reynolds 1987:156-157).

The formulating theories of material culture studies do not promote the approach as the singularly appropriate method. Instead, they serve to present the approach as no more or less important or interesting than other perspectives of anthropological research from which the study of society and culture can be advanced (Stott 1987:29).

Much of the theory surrounding material culture studies in the past was based on information gained from completed studies and so the scope of what could be accomplished through material culture research was limited. Written primary sources are often not available concerning ordinary people but the objects they created, such as tools and textiles, survive.

Subsequently, various objects of everyday use, often pottery or furniture, have been the focus of material culture studies reflecting the common emphasis on the domestic and ordinary. However, the consideration of the courses of past study should not be taken as a directive for the future.

The study of material culture is of course not solely confined to anthropology. It is perceived as an interdisciplinary study of which many academic areas participate. Often however the resulting studies are descriptive, narrative, all-encompassing subject books or pictorial essays. While borrowing the anthropological term "culture" they ignore its purposefulness, leaving these studies to represent any interpretation of accumulated material. Ignored in the studies are the rich insights about human behavior which material culture studies have the potential to yield.

A recent work entitled Making the American Home (1988), provides an example of a material culture study and the potential contributions of similar studies. This collection of articles from various disciplines forms a study of women's transformation of the domestic environment: their making of the American home from 1840 to 1940. Single aspects of the home such as fancywork, interior decoration, the garden, and the front porch are the focus of the book. While maintaining an emphasis on the common, the book offers many insights of the role of women in our consumer society. Such studies have

served to expand and validate the realm of material culture research.

As recognized by Ferguson (1977:8), the list of subjects constituting material culture objects continues "ad infinitum." Curiously, largely overlooked as a potential primary resource are buildings. Sites and structures are incarnations, often irreplaceable, of a nation's heritage and embodiments of a culture.

The study of architecture has been virtually the only recognized study of buildings of any kind other than from a purely technical point of view. Those studies have traditionally been based on the notion of examining stylistic development. However, buildings are more than architectural or engineering accomplishments - they are reflections of a community's or, in some cases, a nation's history and personality. Buildings are modifications to the natural landscape, lasting as concrete evidence of human abilities, hopes, and fears.

Glassie (1983:378) understands the rich potential of building studies and states:

The building was originally the projection of a plan held in a lone mind. Since it is a materialization of one person's intentions, it represents a unified concept, and the conflicts and complexities it embodies are those of one person, one culture, one time, not those of different people, cultures, or times.

Having been built for human occupancy, buildings respond in very direct ways to people's needs. They are simultaneously

both works of art and tools for living, combining aesthetic with utilitarian drives at a variety of conceptual levels. As objects of inquiry, buildings are good and fitting choices; the material survives, they are geographically sited and they are complex. The more complex an artifact is, the more helpful it is to earnest inquiry (Glassie 1983:377). With respect to Glassie's assertions, few studies deal with religious, educational, institutional, commercial, or public building types. Several authors have however recognized the significance of these types in that they are an important part of the economic and cultural development of their surroundings.

Turner (1984) examines the American academic campus from the colonial period to the present and how its design is shaped by the character of a particular institution and reflects educational patterns and ideals. Although derived from European institutions in ideals and aspirations, in this country campuses physically represented cities in microcosm. Their removal to a country versus a city setting mandated the incorporation of an entire range of community facilities, not just classrooms, and so distinguished the American campus. The study is focused upon the examination of building type and the evolution of a new planning tradition as a response to changing educational needs. Through this focus, the interaction between material culture and human behavior is demonstrated. However, these insights are limited and only

minimally consider those who actually use the campus. In addition, by studying the campus as an isolated entity, ignoring the interaction with the regional and local community, it seems that the campus is subject only to lofty ideals.

One of the few attempts to provide a comprehensive examination of commercial building types is Carroll Meeks' The Railway Station (1956). The study is undertaken from primarily an architectural point of view as it attempts to study the development of Western architecture from 1800 as revealed by a single building type: the passenger railway station. However, in the process, the view is not confined to points of architecture and cultural insights are revealed. Drawing material from both Europe and America, Meeks examines in chronological order other aspects of the railway station including its ability to serve new functions, its usage of new construction techniques and new materials, and its presence as an expression of taste. As part of the new system of transportation, these aspects are shown to be reflective of the impact of technology and mobility of the mass public which opened frontiers, spread suburbs, and aided the development of resorts.

With similar success, Mark Leone's (1974) study of the Mormon Temple in Washington D.C., attempts to treat a piece of material culture in its whole social context and emphasizes the role of three dimensional built form in human behavior.

Monumental works of architecture, such as the temple, are the showcases of architects and are seldom challenged by analysis, receiving instead attention based on style, aesthetics or the reputation of the designer. So while the temple did gain much attention from the architectural community upon its completion, little was mentioned as to the significance the structure had in the lives of its intended users. Employing a structural approach in his analysis, Leone determined that the architectural structure of the temple is a reflection of the religious values of the Mormon Church. Its design and layout reflect the keen emphasis within the religion on the relationship of the individual to family and kinship. The structure serves as the site in which Mormons may go through a series of secret rituals and ceremonies which solidify and eternalize these relationships and so acts as a symbol of the Mormon religion.

The process of the symbolization of an object is often highlighted by material culture studies. Alan Trachtenburg (1969) established the importance of the Brooklyn Bridge as a cultural symbol outlining the evolutionary process of the bridge from artifact to symbol. In this case, the ideas of the time period dealing with the shift from rural to industrial life are symbolized by the bridge's construction and presence. An object of study need not be of such national scope of course to elicit pertinent information.

Buildings do not come into existence without people and if not maintained by them crumble. Often new uses for buildings are found. This fashionable trend (gentrification) is addressed by Diamonstein (1986). Diamonstein presents part plea for restoration/preservation, part insight into the cultural process as she interweaves historical, architectural, and social perspectives in the examination of the adaptive reuse of 48 buildings. As consequences for outliving usefulness, buildings are demolished to allow others to be built anew. It is rare within this dynamic process for a building to maintain the same function over the years. Of course a bridge in all likelihood will remain a bridge but as recently evidenced throughout the country, churches may become restaurants, factories may become museums, and warehouse docks may become shopping arcades. However, buildings often become special in that they acquire new status from that which they had when first built.

Richards and Mackenzie (1986) examined railway stations from the most basic level of their architectural form to their role as the hub of nineteenth century village/city life. The railway station is recognized for its contributions to the railway system in particular and to culture and society in general. These conclusions are similar to those defined by Meeks; but, as relationships are drawn between technology and architecture, industry and art, past and future, the railway



station is further revealed symbolically as the capturer of the spirit of the nineteenth century.

The studies mentioned offer penetrating insights about educational, commercial, public, and religious building types and their relationships to culture. Forming an interesting composite of commercial, residential, and public building type is the hotel. Of the few works about hotels many are merely social anecdotes as personally recalled by the author (Jackson 1964; Graham 1970; Ingalls 1949; Ayres 1981) and reveal little cultural information.

A hotel is a complex material structure consisting in part of the building, equipment, and possessions, all of which are artifactual. But a hotel is more than a sum of its artifacts. It is an entity where people, ideas, and behaviors play an influential role as well. In order to make sense of these, it is proposed to use an approach in which the hotel is viewed as a material system with the interaction between human behavior and material culture as the focus. What follows is a study in which four hotels located on Old Point Comfort in Hampton, Virginia, are viewed as objects of material culture. Its task is to exemplify the cultural information which can be learned from and about buildings in their historical context.

## Chapter II

### Part 1

#### The Hygeia Hotel

(1821-1862)

In 1828, Captain Basil Hall, a visiting Englishman, described

a low sandy point, which juts out in a direction nearly south, at the junction of the Chesapeake Bay on the east, with Hampton roads on the west, at the extreme end of the promotory or neck of land which separates the James river from the York river. The excellent anchorage of Hampton roads is formed by three streams, the Elizabeth, the James and the Nansemond rivers; and though it is filled with shoals caused by the deposits from these united floods, there is still enough clear space to render it a place of great importance as a naval station. Heretofore, it has been left quite defenseless, but the American government having lately included it in their extensive list of sea-coast fortifications now in progress, all was bustle and advancement (Hall 1829:84).

The geographical potential reported by Hall had long been realized. In 1607, colonists exploring the area found a deep channel and safe anchorage, which "put them in 'good comfort'" and so named the nearby land mass "Cape Comfort." The name soon changed to Point Comfort. Later when a similar land piece at the mouth of Mobjack Bay in Matthews County was

named New Point Comfort, the "old" prefix was added to the first.

Upon examining Old Point Comfort in 1608, Captain John Smith recognized its strategic value. The next year Captain John Ratcliffe and a detachment from Jamestown were sent down river to fortify the point. A succession of forts appeared on the site, from Fort Algernoune in 1609, to Fort George in 1728, and so on for the next 100 years. However, given the reluctance of the Virginia colonists to appropriate money for the task of maintaining a garrison, the point was largely neglected.

During the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, the ability of the British to travel at will on American sea coasts and waterways demonstrated the need for a coastal defense system. The United States government undertook to establish a comprehensive system of seacoast fortifications. The Bernard Board, led by the French Brigadier General Simon Bernard, was charged with the reconnoitering of the seacoast from Maine to Florida; and, accordingly, various harbor and port defenses were designed.

One of the most elaborate forts to come of this action was to be constructed at Old Point Comfort. Fort Monroe (named after the President at the time of construction) in conjunction with the smaller Fort Calhoun - which was to be constructed on a man-made island on the Rip Raps shoal - would provide cross fire on the channel, blocking entrance to

Hampton Roads, intercoastal waterways, and the naval facilities at Norfolk.

Two acres of land on Old Point Comfort had been ceded to the government by the Commonwealth of Virginia at the beginning of the nineteenth century for the placement of a lighthouse. In 1821, the Virginia General Assembly authorized the Governor to deed the approximately 250 acres of the peninsula between Mill Creek and the Chesapeake Bay and the 15 acres of Rip Raps shoal to the United States for the purpose of construction of the forts. The deed also contained the provision "that if the said United States should at any time abandon the said lands and shoals or appropriate them to any other purpose than fortification and national defenses, then, and in that case, the said land and shoal shall revert to and revest in the said Commonwealth." Inexplicably, the transfer was not made until 1838 (Weinert and Arthur 1978:30).

As designed by General Bernard, Fort Monroe, a septagonal fortification with its seven bastions would cover 63 acres at Old Point Comfort. An eight-foot moat would surround the high granite walls, which were to be 10 feet thick at the base. Broad grassy ramparts would surmount the casemates, in which 380 guns could be housed. Employing the greatest engineering skills of the time in its conception and construction, the fort was thought to be impregnable and was nicknamed "Gibraltar of Chesapeake Bay."

Materials for the construction of Fort Monroe were accumulated at Old Point Comfort during the fall and winter of 1818, and work commenced in March of 1819 (Weinert and Arthur 1978:27). Throughout construction, obtaining an adequate labor force was a continuous problem. Initially, blacks - hired out by their owners for 50 cents a day - were used as laborers (Davis 1928:62). In 1820, military convicts were introduced for a trial period. The original effort proved so successful that all able-bodied soldiers on the Eastern seaboard who had been sentenced to hard labor for more than six months were ordered employed on the work (Dalby 1881:34). Eventually, Army engineers were unable to provide proper guard to the convicts as their numbers increased. Company G of the 3rd Artillery was ordered to guard the convicts, becoming the first permanent garrison assigned to Fort Monroe (Rachel 1952:21).

Much of the earliest work on the fort involved the transportation of accumulated materials to the areas where they would be used. This difficult task was aided by the construction of a canal upon which materials could be transported. Wharves, barracks, roads, workshops, machinery, and quarters were also built as part of the construction effort (Weinert and Arthur 1978:30). As work progressed to the masonry stage in the summer of 1820, the largest portion of those skilled white masons were civilians recruited from outside the tidewater area (Davis 1928:62).

In 1820, William Armistead, who until that time had been working as Superintendent of Labourers, found his position terminated for "lack of sufficient appropriations." Aided by his brother, Chief of Army Engineer Corps at Fort Monroe Colonel Walker K. Armistead (later to be a general), William Armistead applied for permission to build on the peninsula, "a temporary house of entertainment for the accommodation of persons visiting the fort on business or pleasure" (Burkhart Collection: National Archives Documents). Permission was granted to Armistead in 1821 by Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Gratiot of the Engineer Corps, "by and with the consent and approbation of the Secretary of War" and also with these conditions: final permission was dependent upon state approval, and there could be no expense to the government in the construction of said hotel (47-2: Senate Report 966). Armistead erected the building and named it the Hygeia Hotel, borrowing the name of the Greek goddess of health whose statue adorned many of the cupolas of mineral springs. Hotels were frequently named after Hygeia in hopes of promoting an image of cleanliness and reputability. Completed in the summer of 1821, the establishment was managed by James Balfour and Company (The American Beacon August 2, 1821).

During this time, the army was small and did not have the support from the non-combatant divisions that would later develop. Often contracts for labor and supply were given to private firms. The potential profits involved in having the

U.S. Army as a customer caused many small businesses to spring up outside the walls of a new fort.

The lumber for the building was supplied by the firm of Tunis and Parks of Norfolk. The company, which owned a large lumber yard, was the contractor for some of the fort as well as the Marine Hospital. Additionally, they carried on a large West Indian trade and were the principal holders in the Hampton Ferry Company which ran steamers between Hampton, Old Point Comfort, the Rip Raps, and Norfolk (Virginian-Pilot September 7 1902:5).

The early building consisted of "a single room, used as parlor, dining room, and lounging room, with four sleeping chambers on either side of it; the kitchen and servants quarters in an outbuilding to the rear" (Burkhart Collection: National Archives Documents). The earliest extant plan of the hotel dates from 1832 and portrays a similar plan. However, we cannot be sure if this description, probably written in the late 1800's, is accurate to the hotel of 1821 or to that early drawing.

Based on surviving photographs and sketches of other contemporary hotels, the description seems accurate. Additionally, each of the eight chambers opened onto a porch, creating a series of individual compartments. The porch was an element found in most early hostelries, especially those in southern climates, where it provided much needed ventilation.

The early structure followed a form of bilateral symmetry and featured a central space, making it similar to the form and entry hall of a Georgian house. Eventually, the public central area evolved into the lobby of today.

The Hygeia then is probably best described as a "public" or "boarding" house, specializing in accommodating local patrons - invariably civilian workmen engaged in the construction for extended periods of time - and so bore more resemblance in function and appearance to what we would consider an inn or tavern. The use of the word "hotel" was merely a title meant to render itself as a superior kind of establishment.

The Hygeia as such was mainly masculine in patronage as well as in character, supplying reasonable comfort of lodging with emphasis placed on the offerings of food, bar, and stable. In the years that followed, this manly design was subject to a feminization, with the increase of female patrons necessitating the addition of specialized public areas such as a reading or an entertaining room. Fueled by the success of the \$300,000 Tremont House in Boston, the concept of what was expected of a hotel by the public emerged with the greatest emphasis eventually being placed on grandeur, comfort and service.

It is likely that the original structure, although located "under the guns," was not a hindrance to the fort's defensive abilities (Burkhart Collection: National Archives



Documents). Nonetheless, in January of 1822, a more detailed agreement was submitted by Gratiot and signed by Armistead in order to secure the operations of the hotel. Accordingly, it was stated that "such hotel should in no manner interfere with the works" of the fortification and in the event of the violation of this provision, was to be removed on 30 days notice or less at the owner's expense. Furthermore, Armistead could not sell or otherwise dispose of the house without first obtaining authority from the commanding officer (Arthur 1930:234).

Of primary importance to the success of a hotel was the location of the physical plant. The Hygeia Hotel was located on the glacis of the fort between the main and postern gates (at a site now occupied for the most part by the Fort Monroe YMCA), and faced in the direction of Newport News. This close proximity of the hotel to the fort mirrors its close involvement with the fort. As more came to view the work being done there - which was widely regarded as state of the art engineering at the time - the location became profitable, for all those approaching from the dock would pass directly by the hotel. Its location on Old Point Comfort itself caused it to be a literal shelter from the storm. In February of 1822, Henry Clay, speaker of the House of Representatives, was forced by foul weather to discontinue a trip via steamboat from Norfolk to Baltimore. After touring the construction

site, he stayed at the hotel during the inclement weather (The American Beacon February 20, 1822 in Emmerson 1947:214).

Armistead was not long in discovering that an establishment of the Hygeia's size and patronage could not support "a large and dependent family." He was unable to liquidate his account with Tunis and Parks for the construction materials and so with the consent of the Department of War, Armistead sought to relieve himself of the property. In the summer of 1822, Armistead became post-sutler (Burkhart Collection: National Archives Document).

Interest in the hotel was turned over to Wilson Jones, owner of a tavern in Hampton, and Marshall Parks, with Parks acquiring major interest in 1824 (Elizabeth City County Deed Book 3:359 and 232). (It should be noted that the deeds prior to 1865 are incomplete due to the burnings of the Civil War. Those which do exist have been recopied from the originals. Likewise, much of the history of Hampton and the vicinity was also destroyed.)

The Hygeia's function as a boarding house for workers and military personnel involved in construction was decreasing as the work progressed and housing became available within the fort confines. While this role diminished, the hotel's dependence on the fort continued as the fort itself drew more and more people to the area. The hotel began to highlight the recreational and health aspects of the area and the appeal of local attractions. Newspapers were a primary promotional

device. A solicitous philosophy toward the public is evidenced in the following advertisement of May 29, 1822 appearing in the The Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald:

HYGEIA HOTEL

Here lov'd Hygeia holds her blissful seat,  
And smiles on all who seek her bless'd  
retreat.

A Public House, under the above appropriate designation, is now open for the reception of visitors, who may resort to the site of the Fortifications at Old Point, for the gratification of curiosity, the improvement of health, or the indulgence of rational pleasure. - Furnished with every requisite article of the household, it offers to the invalid, the tourist, and the man of leisure, every convenience which the humor of the one, and the fashionable tone of the other may exact; while to the studious and recluse, it presents a retreat from bustle and commensality. It may also be recommended as being in the neighborhood of a great architectural work of the first magnitude, in which the mechanical arts and science of fortification, are supplied with consummate skill and splendid effect. The vast system of national defense on our maritime frontier, is here growing up, into an imperishable monument to the greatness of the American people. Here the Patriot may look with pride on the solid basis of his future security from foreign aggression, exult at the tremendous repulsion that awaits the insulting approach of a future foe. The broad expanse of the Chesapeake and the basin of Hampton Roads, there spread before the eye in all the majesty of space and depth. The lofty ship and diminished boat, exhibit one of the most interesting scenes of busy life, in their passage from the boundless and unfathomable ocean, to the narrow waters of the harbor. The walk or ride on the pebbled beach, may be enjoyed with the still luxury of thought and perspective, while the attention is awakened by the fanning of the sea breeze, the occasional song of the seaman at the lead, and the whispers of the impinging waves. Excursions either in pleasure or steam boats offer another pastime which may be pursued with great convenience and satisfaction; and the pleasures of the field and turf, are also within the compass of

the great variety of amusements that invite the traveller to a healthy and rational enjoyment of life. All the luxuries of the table, the finest Oysters, most delicate Fish, Choice Meats, and savory Vegetables, are procured for repasts, and served up in many different dresses and preparations, as it is hoped, will gratify even the most fastidious. At the Bar will be found the choicest Wines and Liquors, of every description.

The HOUSE is under the management of Mr. Wm. H. HAWKINS, late of the Eagle Tavern, Richmond, who pledges himself to retribute the patronage and liberality of the public, by assiduous and constant attention to his guests, and he cherishes the hope that his enterprize will not be repressed while Virginia retains her character of benevolence and protection.

Travellers from the Southern States are informed, that the Baltimore and New York Steam Boats can, at all times take off passengers from the Point, destined to the North (In Emmerson 1947:236-237).

Parks was a man of many interests and had acquired the hotel as such. Under his reign of involvement, the hotel was to undergo numerous improvements and enlargements, the first of which is mentioned in the following advertisement. The hotel advertisements of this time were all long and repetitious, yet they reveal the broader concept of management (in this case, under Francis Taylor) to give the guests the utmost comfort, luxury, and service.

#### HYGEIA HOTEL

The Subscriber has rented the House at OLD POINT COMFORT, known by the above title, and is now prepared to receive company.

The Proprietor contemplates building a large addition which, when completed will increase the number of rooms to twenty. This will be in readiness early in July.

The easy access to this place by Steam-Boats from Baltimore, Washington City, Richmond and Petersburg, from which the passengers can land within a few yards of the house - the great saving in the expense of horses and carriages, which are entirely useless here - every facility being offered by the Hampton Steam-Boat, which runs daily between Norfolk, Old Point and Hampton - the salubrity of the climate, being constantly refreshed with the sea breezes - the hard sandy beaches for Salt Water Bathing - the Bath Houses which are to be immediately erected for the accommodation of the Ladies, all combined render this the most desirable situation, perhaps, in the United States for invalids, as well as for those whose object is pleasure and amusement.

Sheep's Head, Hog Fish, and other fine Fish for the Table, may be caught in the greatest abundance at and about the Rip Raps, and will afford great amusement to those who may be fond of the sport.

The Subscriber has made arrangements for a constant supply of JUNIPER WATER from the Dismal Swamp - and he promises his visitors an abundant Table of the Best Meats, Fish, Oysters, and, in fact, every thing that can gratify the palate; the best Liquors, Wines, &c. - good attendance, (having already engaged some excellent servants,) and his own time, which will be exclusively devoted to the management of the establishment.

FRANCIS S. TAYLOR

#### TERMS OF BOARD

Per Day	\$3.00
Per Week	8.00

If longer than a week at the rate	7.00
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(The American Beacon May 13, 1823 in Emmerson 1947:285-286).

Though still referred to as "house" it is clear by this time that the hotel had expanded its functions from that of a tavern or inn. Taverns were typically on major transportation routes and offered a meal and lodging for overnight. The hotel style which was emerging at the Hygeia would later be called a "resort," in which guests stayed for

longer periods to enjoy the various amenities offered, making it a place to which they could resort.

Old Point Comfort, though near major transportation routes, was not on a route itself and was not yet a regular stop for steamboats other than for those supplying the fort. Parks was active during the 1820's in the attempt to convert the Dismal Swamp canal to a shipping canal, working as superintendent and chief engineer of the Dismal Swamp Canal Company (Brown 1981:28). The Dismal Swamp Canal was to connect the water which flowed into the Chesapeake Bay with that which flowed into the Ablemarle Sound estuary in North Carolina. It was hoped that through this canal the produce of the fertile lands near the Roanoke river could be transported to the port of Norfolk, which was suffering due to loss of West Indian trade (Hall 1829:111). Parks commissioned the building of several steamboats for this purpose. However, the boats were not fully utilized and instead were used as transportation. In particular, the steamboat Hampton, built in 1822 for Parks, was to become a localized shuttle between Norfolk, Old Point Comfort, and Hampton, serving to accommodate the would-be visitor (Emmerson 1947).

Parks has been inaccurately credited with naming the hotel Hygeia, and thus initiating the "good health" aspect of the establishment. It is certain from the previous advertisement, however, that he promoted the health facilities

and aided the hotel's popularity with his introduction of bathing facilities at the Hygeia. (The Willoughby Point Pleasure House would follow in similar promotion in August of 1823.)

Until 1830, Old Point Comfort had no water supply other than rain water (Weinert and Arthur 1978:61). The water problem added to the already present perception that the Old Point area was, as all low lying areas near the water were, a breeding ground for malaria, cholera, and other diseases. To many, these areas were not thought safe until "one good black frost" had blanketed the area (Hall 1829:111). Not only would an outside source of water be necessary but juniper water, that "primeval eruption of amber-coloured, medically antiseptic water that bubbles out of the Dismal Swamp aquifer, getting its rich color from the juniper trees" (Brown 1981:x), would be an additional health aspect for the hotel, as well as a profitable export for Parks' Dismal Swamp canal enterprise.

The popularity of Old Point Comfort was increasing. A visit to the area, and hopefully, a stay at the Hygeia were becoming fashionable to those setting the standards. From The Petersburg Republican (August 1823):

OLD POINT COMFORT. - This delightful spot is becoming the Brighton of the United States. During one recent visit to the country, we occasionally called at Old Point, to inhale the pure air, and enjoy the other pleasures of that fashionable place. We say we called at Old Point, but as for locating one's self there, without extreme inconvenience, it was next to impossible, owing to

the great number of invalids, loungers and fashionables, that had previously obtained possession of every habitable building on the Point. Numbers were compelled to leave the place, for want of rooms, and others repaired temporarily to Hampton, Norfolk, Willoughby's Point, Lynnhaven Bay, and other situations, awaiting their turn like millers' boys, and chiding the dull progress of time for not hastening the period when the rooms they had bespoke should be vacated. Every boat from Richmond, Petersburg, Alexandria, Washington City and Baltimore, brought an accession to the already surcharged groupe. These either contended themselves with a call, as we did, or hastened to other situations in the vicinity, till their turn came for luxuriating in the pleasures and pastimes of Old Point...

The inconvenience at present attending a visit to Old Point, will be removed in a short time, when the buildings now rapidly erecting shall be completed.

The services of the hotel expanded along with its facilities. In 1825 it was reported that "a new BAR room and several chambers have been added; the bath House is in fine order, and he expects as of the 1st of July to be prepared with warm baths" (The American Beacon June 20, 1825). The functions once housed by the multi-purpose central room were being delegated to specific separate spaces. The additional amenities were placed in the rear service yard, while actual guest rooms served to enclose the yard. The hotel was slowly but surely encroaching upon the military reservation as it expanded its facilities.

#### HYGEIA HOTEL OLD POINT COMFORT

THIS HOTEL is now ready for the reception of Company for the approaching season - the Rooms which require it, have been all fresh painted and otherwise put in complete order, and with



convenience, one hundred persons can be accommodated at all times - my bedding is of the first quality - my table shall be furnished with every thing in season which the neighborhood affords; Fish and Oysters always in abundance, and Crabs as long as considered wholesome; my liquors being purchased by a friend in Philadelphia, not restricted in price, are of the first quality. I have my Ice House well filled with clean Northern Ice, and arrangements are made to have a plenteous supply of good pure Water,,and also Juniper Water, which is considered very wholesome.

Since last season, I have erected in the yard a House with four apartments, for those who prefer warm bathing to cold.

The well established healthiness of the Point, the delightful Sea Bathing upon a long extended hard sandy beach, with a comfortable house erected in a situation where there is a sufficient depth of water at all times for those who prefer it, render this place as desirable as any other on the sea board, for those in quest of health to pass their summer months.

There are other inducements, too, both for the invalid and those in quest of pleasure, to give this place a preference to any other watering place. Steam Boats twice a week from Baltimore, and once a week from Washington, will touch here to land and take off passengers, and the Steam Boat Hampton runs daily between this and Norfolk, for the accommodation of those who wish to visit Norfolk and Hampton - the passing and repassing at all times of vessels of every size and description, to and from Foreign Ports and Coastwise - the magnitude of the fortifications progressing daily, giving employment to several hundred persons, the fine military appearance of the Troops stationed here for a School of Practice, and their elegant Band, are all calculated to amuse and keep off ennui.

Arrangements will be made for Cotillion Parties once a week, and oftener if required, and a Steam Boat can be had every week to take Parties to the Capes, or elsewhere, when the number is sufficient, and timely notice is given.

I wish to employ a BAR KEEPER; one who can be recommended for sobriety, attention and obliging manners, will meet with encouragement. One of middle age will be preferred.

Requested to be published in the Petersburg Intelligencer and Republican, and once a week (on different days) till the 15th June; Richmond Enquirer, National Intelligencer, Baltimore American, the National Gazette (Philadelphia) twice a week till the same period, and the Fredericksburg Herald, once a week ditto, and the accounts be forwarded to

F.S. Taylor  
 (The Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald May 1, 1826 in Emmerson 1949:8-9).

Most inn or hotel keepers were heads of families, with wives and daughters deeply involved in the workings of the establishment. They not only provided manual labor but also acted as hostesses. Other than at special events, the patrons were predominately male. The unattended woman or itinerant was almost non-existent (Yoder 1969:43).

Lieutenant Alfred Beckley was stationed at Fortress Monroe from 1826-1828 and recalled, "North of the fortress there was located a splendid spacious comfortable summer hotel called the Hygea [sic] Hotel, kept while I was there by a clever Kentucky gentleman named Taylor. His family of several daughters occupied a nice cottage on the grounds of the Hotel and we young officers were in the habit of visiting and enjoying the company of these pleasant amiable young ladies, especially in the evenings when our military duties we had ceased for the day. We nicknamed this snug little residence as the 'cuddy'" (Eby 1964:484-485).

At the end of the season of 1826, the Hygeia was offered for rent for one or more years by Marshall Parks.

# HYGEIA HOTEL FOR RENT

This well known establishment and valuable establishment is offered for rent for one or more years. Besides an extensive range of apartments of every description for the general accommodations of Guests, there are attached to the premises a comfortable private dwelling, ice house, stables and bath houses, for sea or warm bathing.

The Hygeia Hotel is situated on Old Point Comfort, the sit of Fortress Monroe, and is accessible to the Steam Boat running between Norfolk and James River, and Washington, Baltimore and Philadelphia, from which passengers can be landed with perfect facility. A steam boat also plies daily from Norfolk. The situation is remarkably healthy, and rendered very pleasant in summer by the sea breeze. Few places indeed are better calculated for an agreeable residence in summer, for invalids as well as those in quest of recreation; and it has latterly become a fashionable resort.

Possession will be given on the 1st of March.

## Marshall Parks

The Hotel is well supplied with Furniture of a very good quality, which may be had on favorable terms.

Francis S. Taylor,  
on the premises, or to  
M. Parks, Norfolk  
(The Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald December 18,  
1826 in Emmerson 1949:31).

The following spring, Francis S. Taylor became affiliated with the Exchange Boarding House in Norfolk (The Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald April 16, 1827 in Emmerson 1949:36).

Evidently, Parks had no luck at disposing of the Hygeia but instead became more personally involved. In 1828, Mrs. Anne Royall travelled through the area and later refers to Parks in her book (1828:259): "the tavern keeper, a Yankee, was very kind and accommodating...." Additionally Mrs. Royall

remarked, "Upon the whole, the society of the Point is of the first class and deservedly attracts the attention of many respectable strangers who travel for pleasure" (1828:261).

Captain Basil Hall, an Englishman visited the area in February of 1828 and had several observations. At that time the fort was one-third complete. According to Hall (1829:92-93), the garrison of the fort was approximately 700 strong comprised chiefly of artillery men and engineers besides "a considerable number of slaves and other labourers." After watching an evening parade, Hall states that his attention was drawn to the clattering of chains from a nearby courtyard. Upon investigating, he found 200 men each carrying a heavy chain in festoon manner between their legs. One end was riveted to the ankle and the other trailed a 24 pound shot through the gravel. These men were deserters of the army, guilty of disobedience or other acts of insubordination. Furthermore, Hall mentions the men were "dressed in party coloured jackets on the back part of which was painted 'United States Convict'."

In 1828, an advertisement in The Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald (June 16, 1828) reads:

THE SUBSCRIBER Marshall Parks returns his sincere thanks for the liberal encouragement afforded to the Hygeia Hotel since it has been in his occupancy, and informs the public, that for the last 12 months he has been engaged in making alterations and improvements. THE INTERIOR OF THE HOUSE HAS BEEN NEWLY PAINTED AND ORNAMENTED.

His ICE HOUSE is filled.

There has been lately erected a Bridge across Mill Creek, and a fine turnpike road will soon be completed between Old Point Comfort and Hampton.

There are bathing houses attached to the establishment...with a warm or cold bath.

#### MARSHALL PARKS

The Bath House erected on the beach, for the convenience of sea bathing, has been provided with a foot path leading from the hotel.

Under the demands of an increasing patronage, Parks continued the hotel's expansion with "its apartments greatly increased in number and neatness" (The American Beacon July 29, 1829) But by the end of the season of 1830, Parks, "otherwise being engaged in business," attempted to rent the hotel "with furniture and servants if required," and once again did not succeed (The Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald August 11, 1830).

In 1831, "the splendid Hygeia Hotel under the management of Mr. Parks, was attended by some of the most distinguished company in Virginia," among those being President Andrew Jackson, on retreat to the Rip Raps. "Mr. Parks, the proprietor is ever on the alert to meet the decided approbation of those who visit his house, which is certainly as well regulated and as well supplied with the choicest materials of the market, as any other Hotel in the United States" (The Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald July 8, 1831 in Emmerson 1949:181).

In 1832, there was an epidemic of cholera at the fort, due to a large sanitation problem. Construction was halted for a time as slave owners, concerned for the safety of their

slaves, were reluctant to continue to hire them out, and illness over took many (Weinert and Arthur 1978:64). Business at the Hygeia responded accordingly, dropping drastically.

In the spring of 1833, President Jackson ordered the captured warrior, Black Hawk, and five other Indians to be confined to Fort Monroe. Colonel Eustis, commander of the fort, was ordered to deal leniently with the group and to give them "every proper indulgence" and to restrict them "only to the limits of the garrison." The warriors, who had lead a faction of Sauk and Fox Indians in a warlike movement to protest the disposition of land granted to their tribe in 1804, arrived at Fort Monroe on May 2 (Jackson 1964:8). Regarded as things wild and savage, they were the objects of much curiosity. Great crowds came to the wharves at Norfolk to witness their landing from the Richmond steamer. At that time, the steamboat from Richmond did not make landings at Old Point Comfort but came from the James through the Swash channel directly to Norfolk. An enterprising Mr. Parks dispatched one of his own steamboats to intercept the Richmond steamer at the mouth of the James. The Indians and their guard were then landed at Old Point to the disappointment of those waiting at Norfolk (Dalby 1881:41).

Tourists flocked to see the Indians, and Parks, seizing the opportunity, chartered steamboats and brought daily excursions from Norfolk, Richmond, Washington, Baltimore, and the Eastern Shore (Burkhart Collection: National Archives

Document). Artists such as Robert Sully, Samuel Brooks, John Wesley Jarvis and Charles Bird King came to capture their "fearsome expressions" (Jackson 1964:8).

While "these interesting objects of public regard" were removed from the fort early in June, even into July when the President arrived it was remarked, "The Hygeia continues to be crowded with fashionable visitors" (Emmerson 1949:236). Once they arrived at Old Point Comfort the public became aware of the local attractions, the fine hotel and bathing facilities (Weinert and Arthur 1978:78). The salubrity of its climate, the presence of foreign war-vessels which rendezvoused in Hampton roads every season to escape hurricanes, and the large number of young officers at the Artillery School combined to create a local society and season of considerable brilliance (Burhart Collection: National Archives Documents). The number of people who had come to see Black Hawk were suggestive of the popularity the hotel was to have in the years to follow. Interest in the area, initiated by curiosity about Black Hawk, coincided with an increase in leisure time and improved methods of transportation; all these factors provided fertile ground for the beginning of the tourist trade.

President, Andrew Jackson, arrived very ill and weak with his White House family and five servants in July of 1833 for another stay with hopes of improving his health. The Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald (July 29, 1833) remarked upon his

arrival that Marshall Parks, "the polite and attentive host of the Hygeia," was to "cater for his table" (In Emmerson 1949:234). The President remained for most of the month of August. During that time the following bill was incurred:

Commenced Board 27 July 1833 at Hygeia Hotel

To Board 3 weeks & 5 days Self	\$31.50
" " Ditto A Jackson Jr	31.50
" " Ditto Mrs. Jackson	31.50
" " Ditto Mr. Earle	31.50
" " Ditto Mrs. Donaldson	31.50
" " Ditto 3 Children do	31.50
Ditto 2 Servants do	31.50 63.00
of Mrs. Donaldson's	
Ditto 1 servant Mrs. Jackson's	5.75
Ditto 2 servants of Genl. Jackson's	<u>31.50</u>

267.75

To 12 Bo: Champaign 2	\$24.00
12 " : Clarret	12.00
12 " : Maderia	24.00
15 " : R.A. Do 9/	22.50
18 " : Port Wine 9/	27.00
3" : Fountinac	3.00
6" : French Brandy	6.00

118.50

To 2 Bo Old H Gin	2.00
12 1/2 Do Porter	3.00
3 galls. Old Whiskey	3.00
6 Bo: Olives	1.50

9.50

395.75

Re'd Payment  
Marshall Parks  
Hygeia Hotel Fort Monroe Va.  
Augt. 22nd, 1833

Settled  
Marshall Parks  
Pr. Wm H Parks

PS No charge is made for Company Entertained while  
at the Rip Raps



Respectfully  
Marshall Parks  
Pr. Wm H Parks

(Bassett 1931:168-169).

In July of 1835, Jackson began his fourth visit to the area. Accompanied by several of his family and a few friends the President remained until August 16.

Account with F.M. Boykins

Fortress Monroe  
August 16, 1835

President Jackson	
1835 to F. M. Boykins	Dr
To 41 days Board at \$1.12 1/2 per day	46.12
for Mrs. Donelson	46.13
for Mrs. Jackson	46.12
Mr. Jackson	46.13
Col. Earle	46.12
10 days Major Donelson	11.25
6 servants at 3/	138.00
2 Boys 7 days at 3	7.00
	386.87
Wine etc	40.50
for company	150.00
Aug. 16th Recd payment in full	\$576.87
F.M. Boykin	

(Burke 1941:89).

By 1834, the fort was largely finished and the hotel now had the capacity to accommodate 400 people as the popularity initiated during Black Hawk's confinement continued. In May of that same year, Francis M. Boykin announced his leasing of the hotel for the following five years and assured the same fine quality of service, fine food, sea bathing, and good water (The American Beacon May 31, 1834 in Emmerson 1949:262-263). "Mr. Parks, the proprietor and late occupant," went on to become more active in the operation of Norfolk's expanding steamboat lines listed as agent for, and, in some cases, owner

of, a number of vessels performing various of services (Brown 1981:28).

Once again, in order to dispense of debts (possibly those incurred by the numerous additions), Parks sold interest in the hotel in 1838 to several people (Elizabeth City County Deed Book G:480). It was noted that R. Hudgins and J. Moody "have taken" the hotel in 1841 which sported "70-80 rooms,... a spacious SALOON, BALL ROOM and REFECTORY, with various other amusements...." Baths were still a primary attraction with this noted addition: "Regular boarders will be admitted gratis to the Sea Baths, and will be charged a small compensation to the warm. A moderate charge to both made to transient visitors" (The American Beacon May 14, 1841).

Not much is known of Robert Hudgins, but Moody was said to be the "right hand man" of Mr. French of Norfolk, owner of French's Hotel there (The Baltimore American June 16, 1841). Various documents attest to the attempts made by Hudgins and Moody to meet their debts (Elizabeth County Deed Book I:227 and 231). The indenture of March 15, 1843 lists the following property as interest given in exchange for \$2000:

- 38 double mattresses
- 42 single "
- 30 feather beds
- 35 double bedsteads
- 28 single "
- 106 pillows
- 78 bolster
- 132 linen sheets
- 60 cotton sheets
- 96 counterpanes
- 108 linen pillow cases
- 26 cotton pillow cases

244 chairs  
 40 looking glasses  
 40 pine tables  
 20 mahogany tables  
 10 fire sets  
 8 mahogany wash stands  
 100 window curtains  
 12 worsted carpets  
 52 pine wash stands  
 100 pitchers  
 100 linen and diaper towels  
 480 plates  
 60 dishes  
 12 sets castors  
 120 pieces of china  
 100 pieces of glassware  
 144 German silver spoons  
 144 " " tea spoons  
 16 sets knives and forks  
 4 mahogany sofas  
 40 sugar dishes  
 100 salt cellars  
 10 table cloths  
 4 single table cloths  
 8 mahogany bureaus  
 4 pine bureaus  
 1 billiard table  
 3 cows  
 3 mares  
 2 saddles  
 2 4 wheeled carriages  
 the wines and liquors that may remain on hand as  
 the stock...  
 the bar fixtures...  
 all the kitchen furniture and all other furniture

Hudgins and Moody were unable to succeed, and the hotel was purchased by James French in 1845 with the government agreement made binding June 6, 1849. After purchase French proposed vast improvements of the hotel (Figure 1). The plan of improvements submitted to the Secretary of War in 1844 was surprisingly similar to those of the Tremont House in Boston (Figures 2 and 3). The stepped pediment was a direct

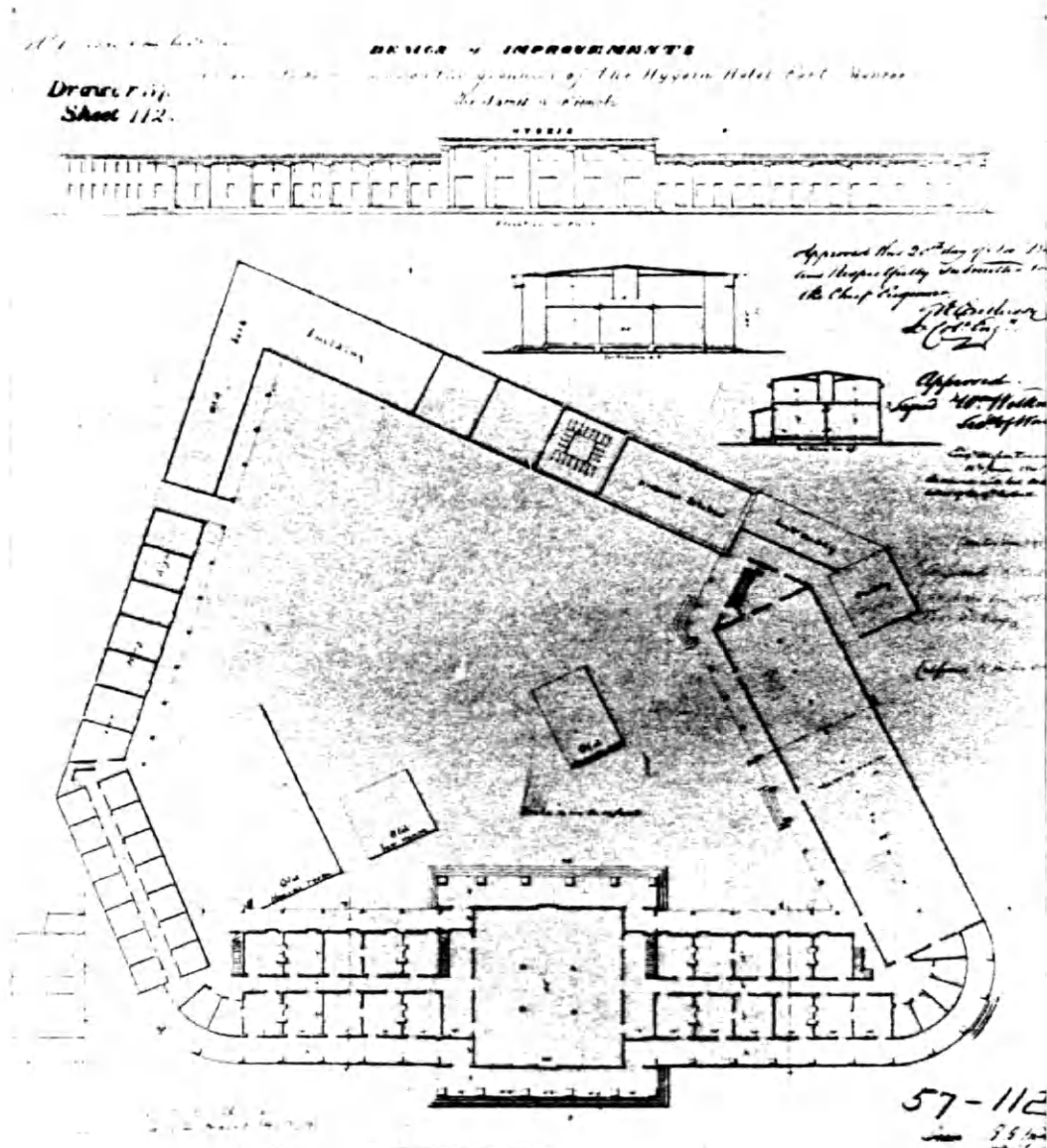


Figure 1. These plans for improvements to the Hygeia Hotel were approved by the Secretary of War in 1844. There is marked similarity to the plans of the Treatment House in Boston (Burkhart Collection).

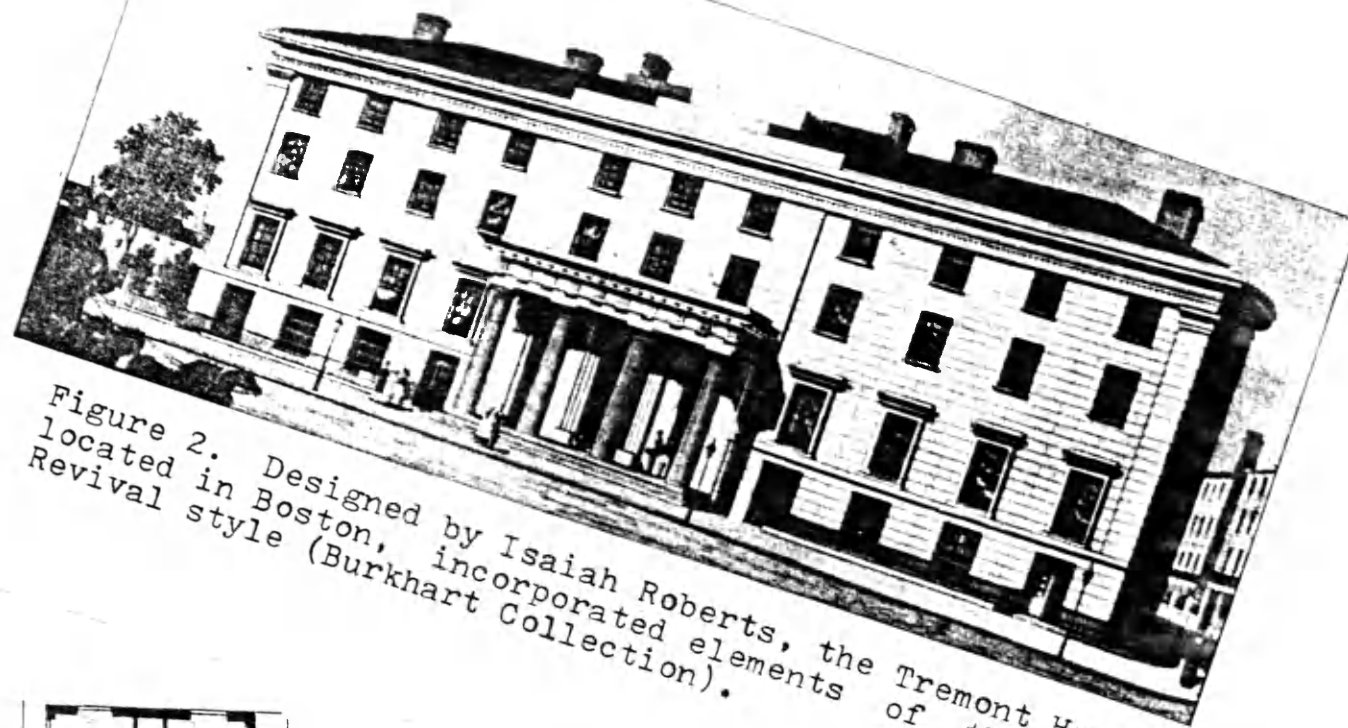


Figure 2. Designed by Isaiah Roberts, the Tremont House located in Boston, incorporated elements of the Greek Revival style (Burkhart Collection).

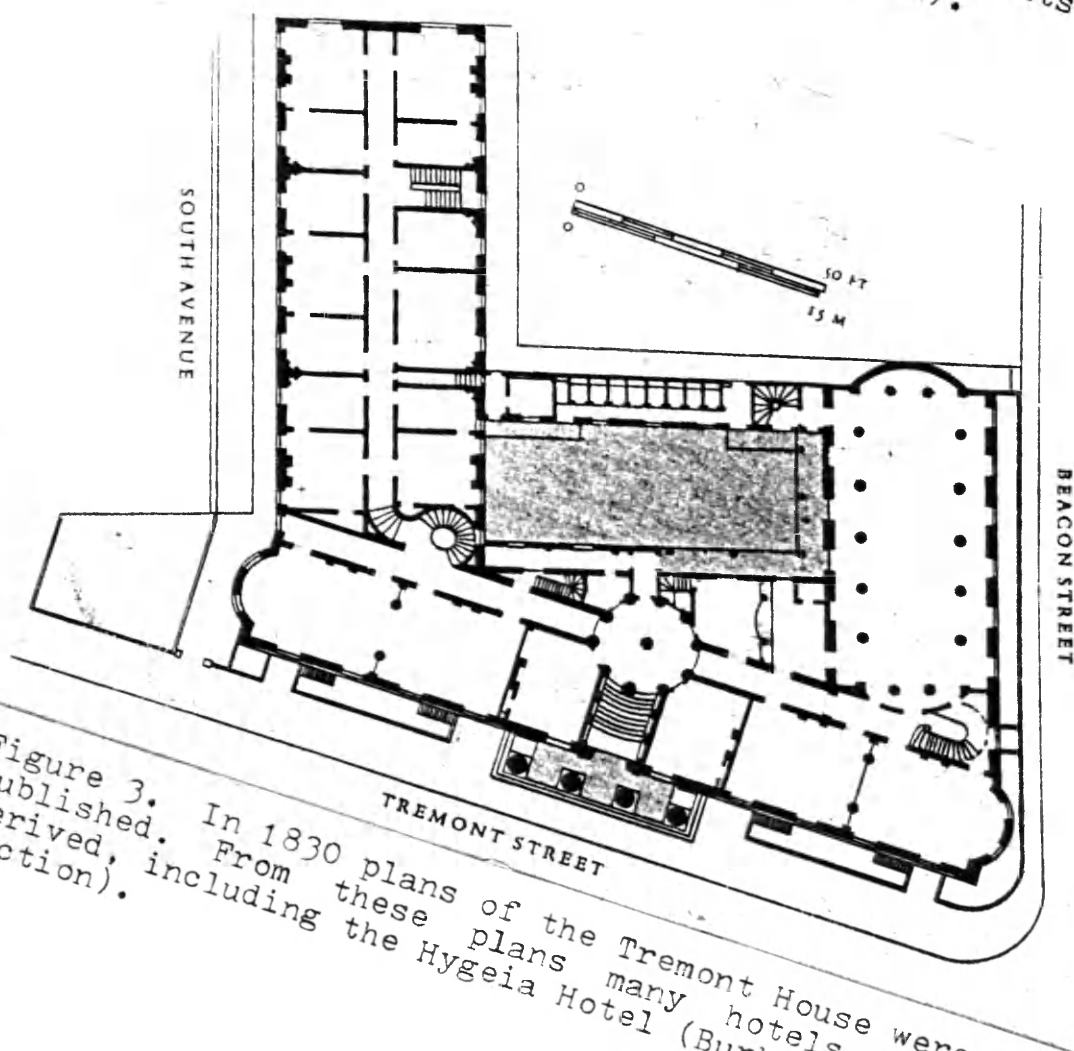


Figure 3. In 1830 plans of the Tremont House were published. From these plans many hotels were derived, including the Hygeia Hotel (Burkhart Collection).

copy of that of the Tremont, and even the unusual angle created by Boston's South Avenue and Beacon Street was incorporated into the structure (Burkhart Collection: Personal Manuscript). The new hotel was designed to encircle the old hotel. According to plan a large central unit was to remain the major public space with symmetrical wings extending out laterally to contain guest rooms. Many more rooms were to be gained as most of the supporting public spaces except for the new ballroom and dining room would remain in the old hotel building.

While the plan was approved by various government officials, later drawings do not support that this plan was fully used (Figure 4). A similar layout is evidenced with the dining room removed from the center, which could then be cleared for dancing. In all, the hotel, now characterized by its horizontality and composition of chunky elements, had the distinct markings and proportions of the American interpretation of Greek Revival style. This was subject to an even more localized interpretation as workmen were often at odds for materials and had limited skills.

Perhaps the best physical description of the hotel and its recent additions comes from Disturnell (1855:131-132):

...a lofty, commodious, elegant airy, noble structure, in somewhat of a crescent form, with an unbroken front of three hundred and forty two feet; a piazza, front and rear, running the entire length and supported by twenty six tall and massive columns; a hall in the center, fifty five feet square, constructed upon a plan at once grand, simple and convenient....

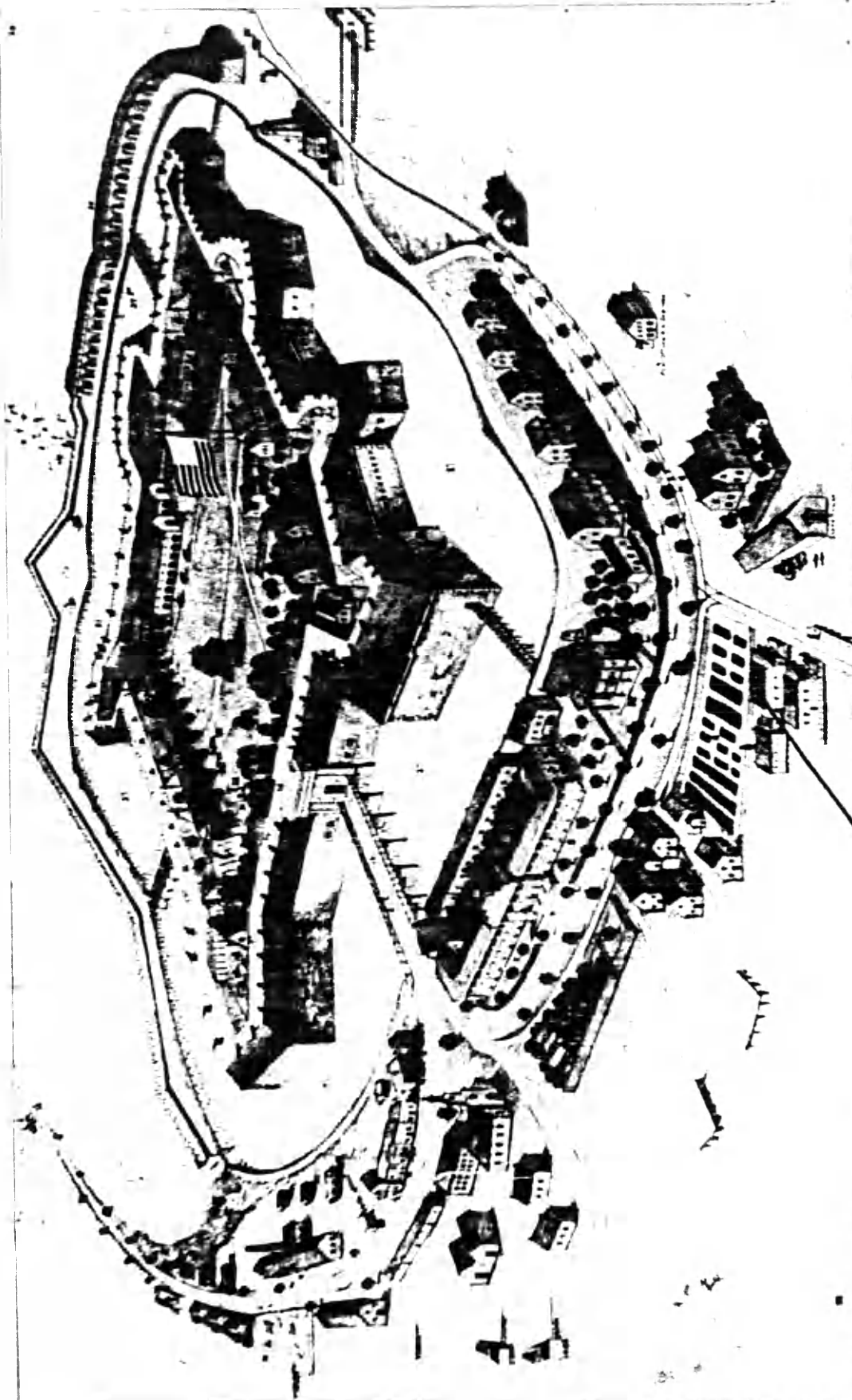


Figure 4. In this drawing, the angles of the Hygeia Hotel do not conform to those proposed in the approved plans of 1844 (Burkhardt Collection).

The front and rear rooms of this new Building, on both stories, are separated by wide and pleasant passages opening to the North and South; upon the top, which is neatly covered with tin, is an observatory....

The piazza or veranda had been modeled after those of the hotels at Saratoga. Service dependencies were located further to the rear on the moat edge.

As seen in the 1844 plans, and actually built, the second story guest rooms were located off straight double-loaded corridors. This plan provided each room with an exterior window. Ground floor rooms could be entered from the veranda as well as from the corridor and also had windows. The creation of suites was accomplished by opening passages between contiguous rooms. In hotels built according to this plan, very few corner rooms - which offered the only possibility of cross ventilation - existed (Cromley 1978:19). Those which did were in high demand and often reserved for the most important guests.

It was in such a room that President and Mrs. Tyler stayed a year after their honeymoon stay at Old Point Comfort, arriving at the Hygeia on June 23, 1845. On the afternoon of the 28th a storm arose. According to Mrs. Tyler, the roof covered a very extensive building and was entirely laid over with tin. Their room was in the "corner of the new building which is evidently fragile and not yet completely finished." (Tyler Family Papers Collection Box 7 Folder 10).



As the storm progressed, there was much noise, and the president and his wife went out into the hall; from there they ran to the door opening onto the long piazza that wound around the house, hoping to make their way downstairs to other parts of the establishment. They found the piazza had been swept away by the storm. Tin was hanging over the windows, leaving the room in darkness. Little, save the plaster overhead, separated the Tylers from the heavens above. However, in all the confusion, Mrs. Tyler was able to save her canary (Tyler Family Papers Collection Box 7 Folder 10).

Following the disruption caused by the storm, Mrs. Tyler made several comments regarding the company at Old Point Comfort, stating: "Point Comfort is agreeable for the married ladies because of the married society is one of the best selection as far as it goes, but I do not think young ladies would find it very agreeable accepting [sic] those who are content to become officers' wives - which to my view is the very last thing to be desired." The Tylers remained well into the month of July and upon reviewing the stay to her mother, Mrs. Tyler wrote, "I enjoyed myself up to the last moment at Point Comfort and derived much pleasure from the society, all of which I associated with were elite anywhere. A great deal of my time was spent in rolling ten pins" (Tyler Family Papers Collection Box 7 Folder 10).

Edgar Allen Poe had been posted at Fort Monroe between 1828 and 1829. He returned there in 1849. While at the

Hygeia, it is reported, he recited poetry on the veranda for the pleasure of several young ladies (Casemate Museum Papers No. 3).

The climate and expanded facilities had gradually attracted increasing numbers of visitors. Old Point Comfort was becoming known as a place to resort. The resort hotel was limited by the bounds of travel, and given the expense of travel, was accessible to a limited group. It was becoming the most fashionable resort for the wealthy planters and statesmen from the southern states. At the time Washington afforded few comforts and little society for the wives and daughters of Congressional members. Many of them became accustomed to rendezvous at Old Point Comfort during the season, where they were joined Friday nights by the government men who remained until Monday mornings (Burkhart Collection: National Archives Documents). According to an editorial in DeBow's Review (1858:246-247), the place was "devoid of the stiff conventionalities that mark upstart society...." It was stated that, "we are indeed like one large family..." (The New York Times August 23, 1860). Despite the decidedly Southern atmosphere, it was noted that there were but few Southern journals except for those specially ordered: "Northern papers alone find sale" (The New York Times August 29, 1860).

A petition submitted in 1850 to the Secretary of War, found that "present accommodations at Old Point Comfort are entirely inadequate to the convenient and comfortable enter-

tainment of visitors who resort to that place as well for health as pleasure and recreation." The petitioners, 31 in all, requested permission for David Keeling of Norfolk to erect another building for that purpose (Burkhart Collection: National Archives Documents). While the plan was approved, the hotel was never erected.

In 1851, James French sold the hotel to Andrew Mehaffey and Joseph P. Reynolds for the amount of \$10,091.35 (Elizabeth City County Deed Book M:136). Plans were submitted to further enlarge the hotel by adding another group of rooms along the same axis. Several plans were submitted and the most modest, designed by J.H. Sale, was built. This resulted in two additional blocks which radiated at angles off the central pavilion (Figure 5). Further enlargements were planned, but Reynolds and Mehaffey were having financial trouble and were forced to sell.

"This extensive establishment will be offered at public auction on the 21st" (Southern Argus August 10, 1853). The hotel was auctioned to Mr. W. H. Buck for \$47,800, but being unable to comply with the terms, Mr. Buck sold to J.C. Willard and H.A. Willard, proprietors of the City Hotel in Washington (Poore 1886:483).

William Forrest wrote in 1853 (470):

At Old Point there is a splendid hotel, kept in excellent style; the tables, during the summer months, are plentifully supplied with the choicest viands, among which may be named the best of fish and oysters, which, with the superior facilities for sea-bathing and the delightful ocean breezes,

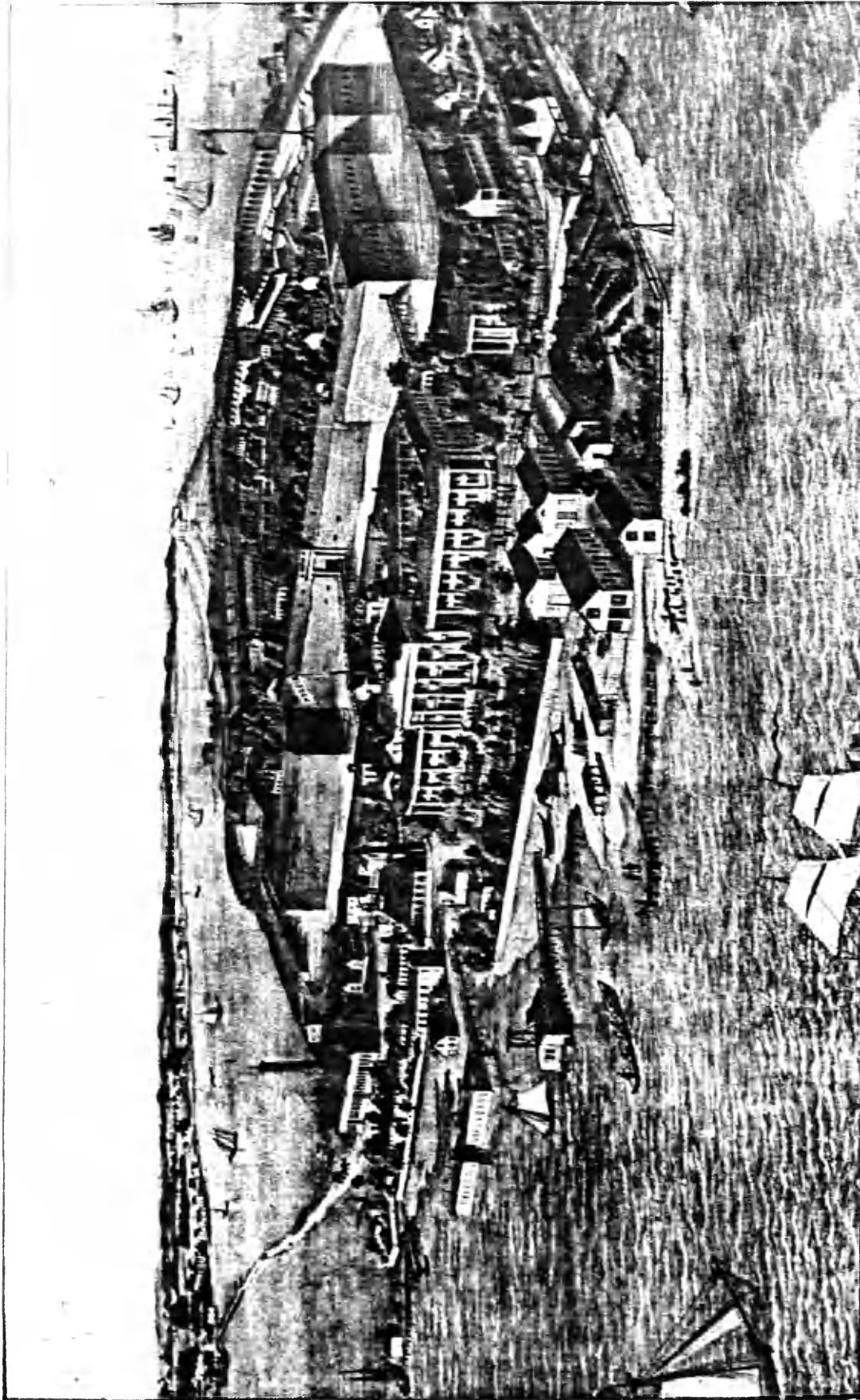


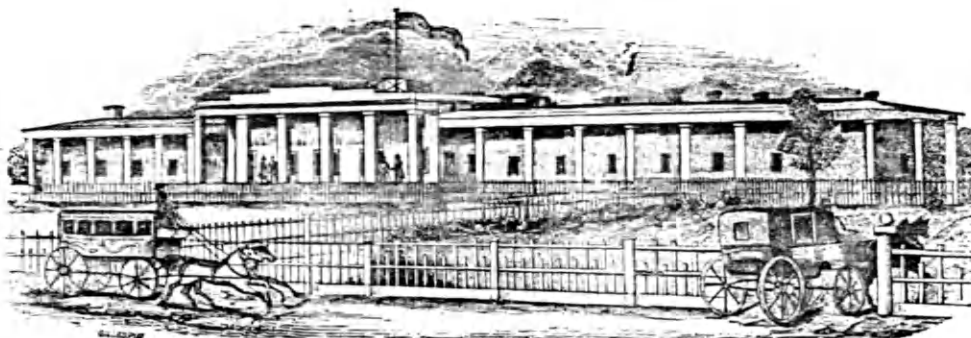
Figure 5. This enlargement of an Edward Sachse print shows the 1851 addition as two blocks radiating at angles off the rear of the central pavilion (Burkhardt Collection; Debak 1985:plate 41).

the novelties and attractions connected with the fort, the convenient distance to Norfolk, Richmond, Washington, Baltimore, &c., unite to concentrate a large number of visitors there during the summer season in search of pleasure, and for the purpose of recruiting impaired health. Detached from the building, are extensive billiard saloons, bowling alleys, and pistol galleries, for exercise and amusement, and commodious bathing-houses; the groves of trees in the front and rear of the house, afford an abundance of shade; vegetation had taken a fresh start at the Point. A short distance from the hotel, are two ranges of neat cottages, enclosed beautified with vines, flowers, trees, and shrubbery, almost obscuring them from view. On three nights in the week, the rich strains of the splendid Garrison Band, fill the air with dulcet sounds, harmonizing with the exhilarated feelings of the listener. On these occasions a promenade on the battlement of the fortress gives life and vigour to the entire system.

Preliminary arrangements are being made for the erection of an extensive hotel on the beach, not far from the fortress at Old Point, to be called the Virginia Ocean House (Figures 6 and 7).

On June 15, 1857, Joseph Segar obtained control of the hotel. Senate Report 966 states that on June 15, 1857, certain articles of agreement were subscribed to by Joseph Segar who had become meanwhile gained interest. On November 11, 1859, C.C. Willard also subscribed to the terms of agreement having become joint proprietor with Segar (47-2: Senate Report 966).

Segar acted as manager/proprietor and did not lease the management of the hotel to another party, according to Edward Ruffin. In his extensive diary, Ruffin described his stay at Old Point in 1857 (Scarborough 1972). Arriving on June 26, Ruffin states, "Took lodgings at the hotel at Old Point



J. D. TOY, PRINT. BALD.

Mr Dotmuy Laoy  
 received Inx 21<sup>st</sup> 53 To HYGEIA HOTEL, Dr.

For 1 3/2 Day's Board at \$1.73 per day.....	\$ 47.25
Do. Breakfast.....	
Do. Dinner.....	
Do. Supper.....	
Do. Lodging.....	
Do. Sundries, viz: Wine 2.00	2 00
Wine, \$	50
Beer, \$	
Porter	
Warm Baths	
Postage	
Washing 33 x 25	58
Received payment	\$ 51.33

For the Proprietor,

Old Point Comfort, Va.

July 5<sup>th</sup> 1852

C. C. Willard

Figure 6. This 1853 bill from the Hygeia Hotel is signed by C.C. Willard who became joint proprietor with Joseph Segar in 1859 (Burkhart Collection).

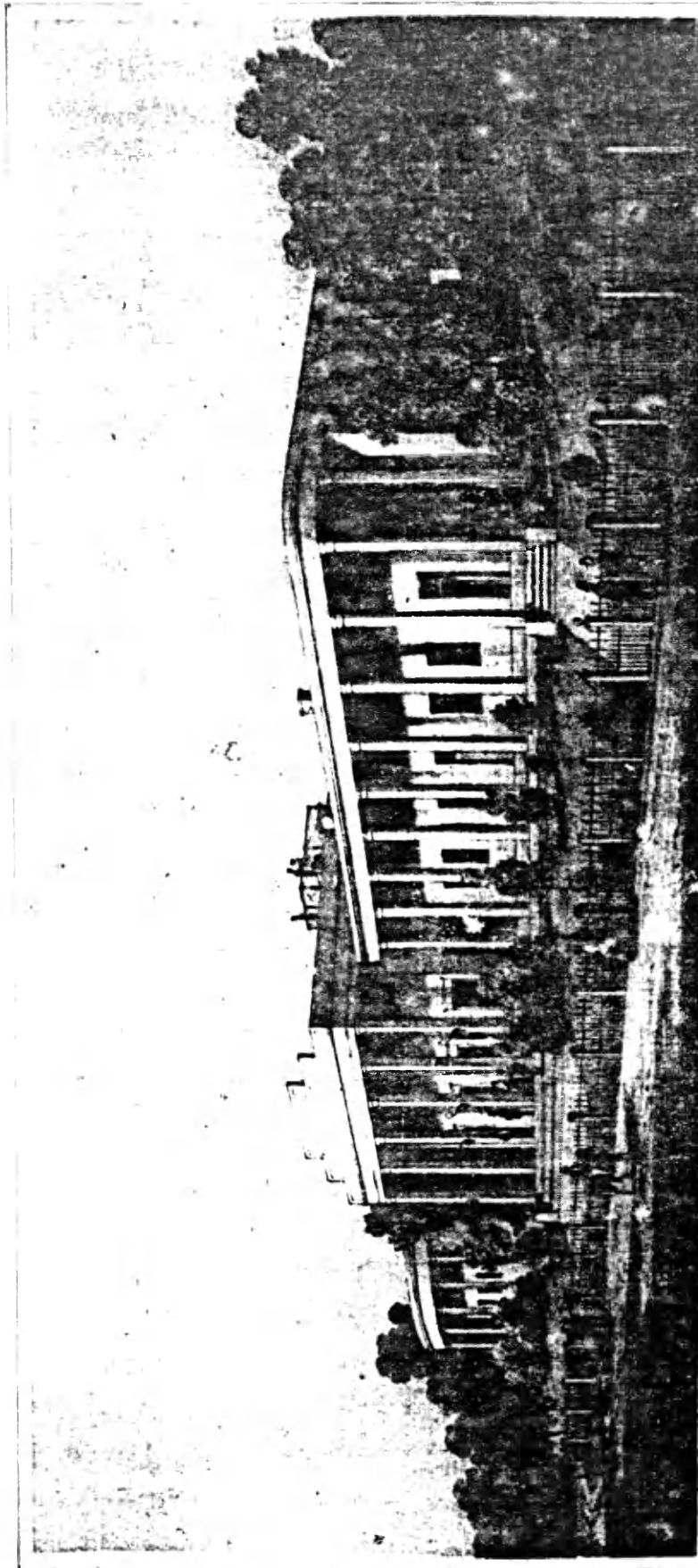


Figure 7. During his travels throughout the United States, Edward Beyer, an artist known for his precision in artistic documentation, produced this drawing of the Hygeia Hotel in 1856. Note the vantage point on the top of the building and lush gardens to the right (Beyer 1858; Debak 1985:plate 36).

Comfort - to stay as long as I may find agreeable." He found, "More than 100 boarders here - mostly from cities - and the officers of Fortress Monroe." Ruffin found Old Point Comfort to be "a beautiful place, independent of its military strength and imposing appearance as a fortress." Finding that he had read all of his books, "...I borrowed some books from Mr. Segar, the proprietor of the hotel" (1972:84). Ruffin was upset during his stay: "A drunken and noisy man in the next room disturbed me until midnight" (1972:209). On July 5, many sailing vessels and boats arrived and eight steamer trips with many passengers from Norfolk came. "At night a brilliant display of fire-works at the Fortress, to see which most visitors staid - and many had to remain through the night, for want of conveyance to Norfolk." Being a man in his 60's, Ruffin's primary interest lay in the reading of books; finding himself at a loss for this, he commented, "Still much of the day hung heavy on my hands, and I shall be glad to leave the place so soon. I have nothing to read or to write - and I take no part in the various amusements in some of which nearly all others join, for pleasure, or to kill time, as fishing, billiard, ten pins, smoking and drinking, card playing, or for a few, faro bank" (1972:209). Ruffin left the Point for a short trip through the Dismal Swamp area with Marshall Parks Jr. On July 11, he returned and "found a great increase of company - over 700 in all" (1972:213). Ruffin still found the place tiresome and found "nothing to employ or amuse me but



conversation and nothing to read..." (1972:214). On July 14, a government steamer arrived with a party of dignitaries from Washington who could not get quarters, the rooms being all occupied. The group was affiliated with Miss Harriet Lane, who acted as Hostess for the administration of her uncle, President Buchanan. "Their not being able to attain rooms is good proof that the house is quite full..." commented Ruffin (214).

Despite his seemingly unrewarding stay in 1857, Ruffin returned in 1860. "This place is especially tiresome after-dark, to those who, like myself, do not dance, or drink, or play cards. There is no public room for gentlemen to meet in at night for conversation and so there is no meeting place of that kind" (Scarborough 1972:441). When Ruffin was able to find gentlemen to converse with, talk often turned to the political unrest of the South.

The season of 1860 was judged by The New York Times social correspondent to be the most successful season yet experienced at the Hygeia (August 16, 1860). By August of that year the guest count had already exceeded the 4600 of the previous year, which had itself exceeded by 200 the 1859 count at Congress Hall in Saratoga.

Two distinct seasons were clearly evidenced at the hotel. The first season lasted from the beginning of June through mid-August. These visitors, on their way to the Virginia springs and northern summer resorts, would come and go in

rapid succession. Often they stayed but a few days and then "scattered away to the mountains." The second, less-crowded season extended after the first to late October. This group was more select - "those who appreciate the luxuries of Old Point and come to enjoy them" (The New York Times August 16, 1860).

The hotel also provided extended lodging as families connected with "the Public works" engaged quarters as permanent boarders. Together with the 15 to 20 officers who messed at the hotel, it was agreed there was an agreeable "society" year round (The New York Times August 16, 1860). The officers of the fort were well entwined with the social activities of the hotel, with "young gallant officers" providing escorts: military vessels even acted as the flag ships for hotel-sponsored fishing excursions (The New York Times August 29, 1860).

As talk of the secession of the South increased, General Benjamin Butler was sent to Fort Monroe with instructions to establish the fort as a center of operations. Fort Monroe was viewed as especially important to the Union defenses. It remained a Union stronghold throughout the war.

When the South seceded, Hampton Creek became the borderline of the North and South. Blacks flocked to within Northern lines. Using whatever materials were available, fleeing slaves erected shanties and tents to make shelter. By an order issued May 1861, General Butler declared his refusal

to give up any slaves who came to Fort Monroe stating in effect that they were property and "the contraband of war" (Armstrong and Ludlow 1874:13). Many were used as laborers in the defensive preparations.

The docks were full of ships unloading and Old Point Comfort was literally swarming with troops. When the 1st Vermont arrived in May and was sent to camp within the water battery of the fourth front, a space shortage forced a movement to the Hygeia Hotel. Cook tents dotted the front yard and the men slept five to a room sharing beds or sleeping on the floor. In return for these accommodations, the regiment had to pay the hotel's owner \$1000 per month (Farnham Letters 1861).

Gone was the "society" of the previous seasons but, in addition to the troops, pleasure seekers, war correspondents, curiosity seekers, and others who follow the activities of an army were housed at the hotel. Some of these characters proved to be embarrassing to the military. On March 14, 1861 Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton telegraphed General Wool giving him permission "in your discretion, to require the immediate departure of all persons not in the service of the United States, whose presence may incommode operations and to exclude unauthorized persons from stopping or remaining there, until further notice" (Weinert and Arthur 1978:115).

Later that year, General Butler ordered the hotel taken over for use as a hospital (Figure 8). The two-story dining

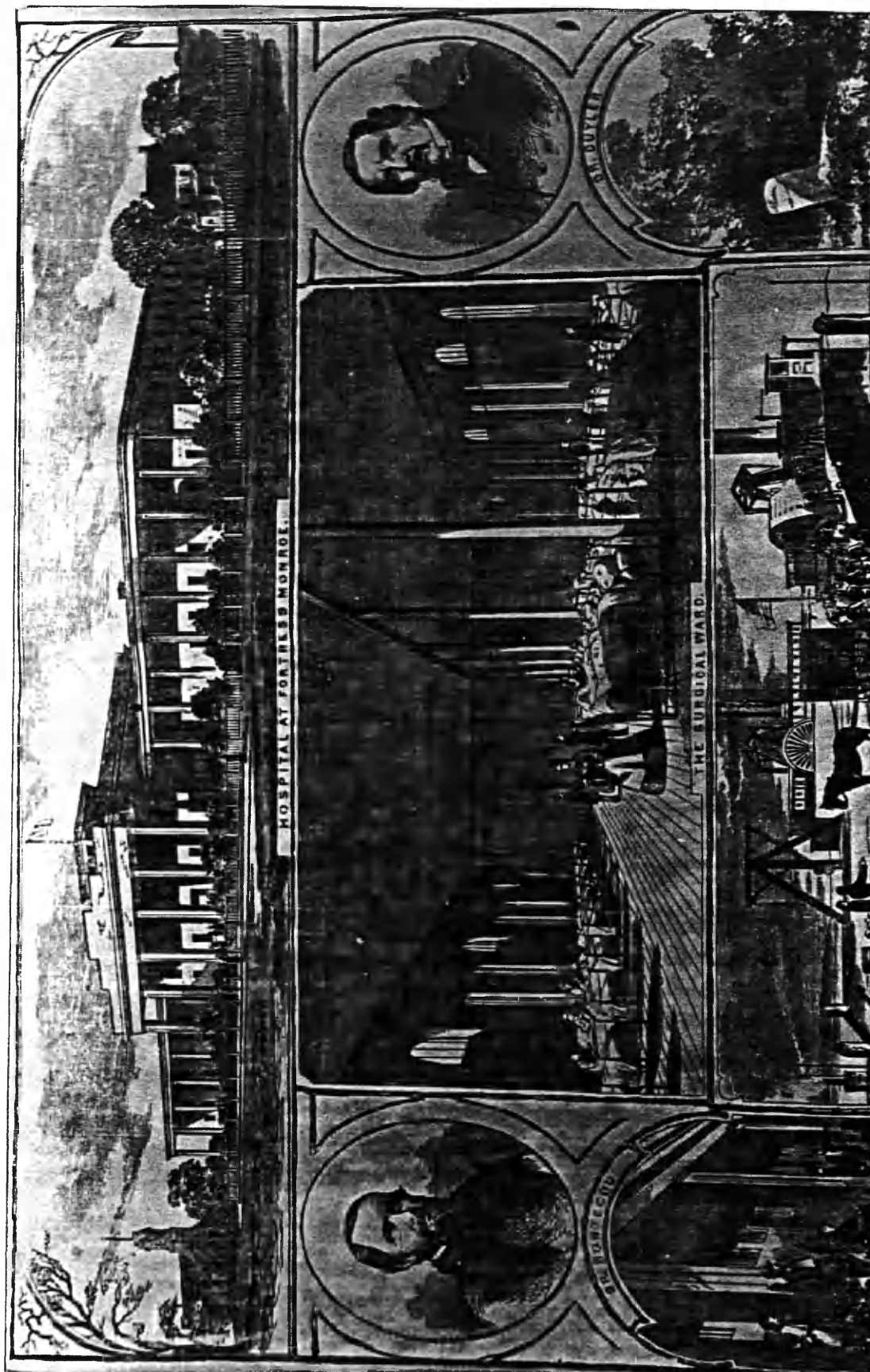


Figure 8. As per orders issued by General Butler, the Hygeia Hotel was taken over for use as a hospital in 1861. The dining room served as surgical ward (Harper's Weekly June 7, 1862:358).

room portion served as a surgical ward, with the offices of the Provost Marshall and Medical Director also housed in that wing (Harper's Weekly September 30, 1862:605). A payment of \$2000 per month was requested by its owners as compensation for damages. Assessment for its usage was determined by a board to be \$800 per month. Even this lesser amount was determined by Generals Butler and Wool to be too high (Butler Correspondence July 25, 1862).

The entire question of the defense and safety of the fort and garrison, with respect to the location of the hotel was addressed by Major General Dix in a letter of August 16, 1862 to General McClellan (Burkhart Collection: National Archives Documents). The hotel was said to block view of the southern approach and, being constructed of wood, proposed a serious fire hazard; if fire were to occur, it would temporarily block the usage of guns on that side (Figures 9 and 10). While the hotel had been tolerated for the last 30 years, it was now seen "in violation of all military rules and it has gathered around it a class of buildings which are a positive nuisance." The buildings in question "are covers for filth, which has been for years accumulating...." It was suggested that the hotel be moved to a more suitable spot away from the fort.

Despite the legitimate complaints by the Army, rumor surrounded the loss of favor of the hotel with the military command. It was said that this was caused when Mrs. Willard, wife of one of the owners, cheered for the Confederate Army



Figure 9. The strategic location of Old Point Comfort and Fort Monroe is related in this 1862 drawing which also shows a detailed rendering of the Hygeia Hotel (Harper's Weekly 1862:53).



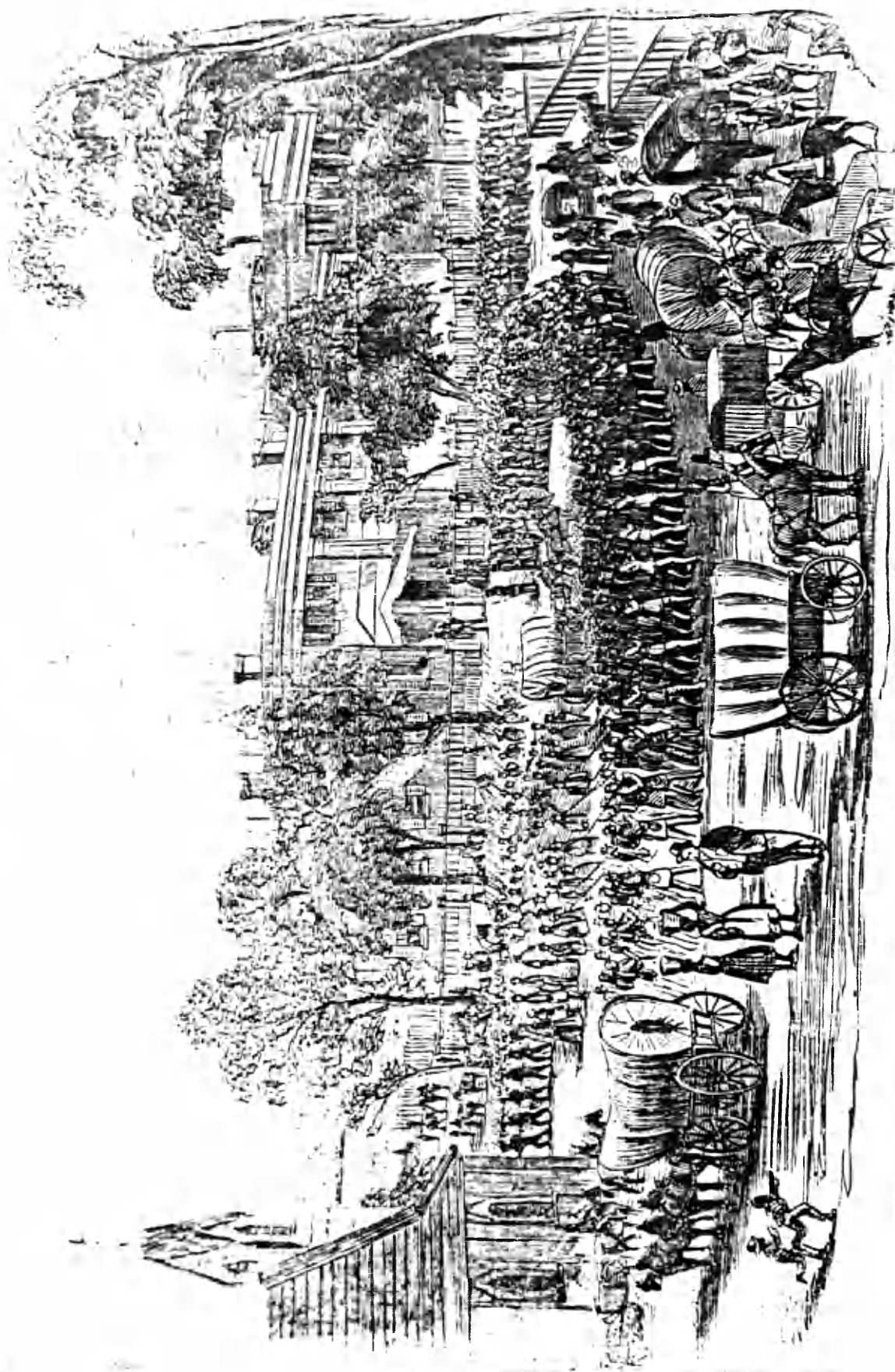


Figure 10. Fort Monroe, a union stronghold, was the site of much activity during the Civil War. This scene depicts the Army of the Potomac passing the Hygeia Hotel (Harper's Weekly 1862:604).

after the Battle of Manassas (The Norfolk and Virginia Pilot September 7, 1902:5).

In any case, by orders dated September 1, 1862, the removal of the hotel "due to the exigencies of war" was called for under terms of the original agreement. On December 1, 1862, under the direction of General Dimrick, the hotel was demolished. Left remaining was "the cottage" occupied by Col. Segar's family, scheduled to be removed by March 1st (Burkhart Collection: National Archives Documents).

Although it was originally intended that this action should be at the owners' expense, it was performed at public expense. Carted away by a small tram pulled by 50 government teams, the lumber was sold piecemeal by C.C. Willard (Virginian-Pilot September 7, 1902:5). It is supposed that many of the houses of Phoebus (then Chesapeake City) were constructed of this material.

While the ensuing Civil War had transformed the ambience of Fort Monroe, the recreations and amusements once found there were obliterated with the removal of the Hygeia Hotel. It was remarked by local inhabitants that "Before the war, Hampton and Old Point Comfort were favorite watering-places with the better class of Virginians, and summer after summer had seen the rambling, airy houses filled with Southern Aristocracy; so that the havoc of war wrought a quick and startling change from the gayety of one season to the terror of the next" (Armstrong and Ludlow 1874:4).



Part 2  
The Hygeia Hotel  
(1863-1902)

The Hygeia Dining Saloon was erected in 1863 as a small one-story frame building near the Baltimore wharf at Old Point Comfort (Figure 11). The owners were Joseph Segar and C. C. Willard, who had been the owners of the Hygeia Hotel that was torn down in the previous year. In a document dated May 1, 1863, Major General John A. Dix stated in writing that "Messrs. Segar and Willard have permission to establish a restaurant on the east side of the road near the Baltimore Wharf, and to put up a building for the purpose according to the plan submitted and approved. The site used is to be at all times subject to the direction of the Secretary of War" (57-2: Senate Report 2836). The new structure was to be used as a restaurant for the accommodation of transient officers.

D.T. Norris of Boston was granted permission on or about July 25, 1864 to purchase from Segar and Willard the building "known as the Hygeia Restaurant and continue the business as heretofore conducted by them" (57-2: Senate Report 2836).

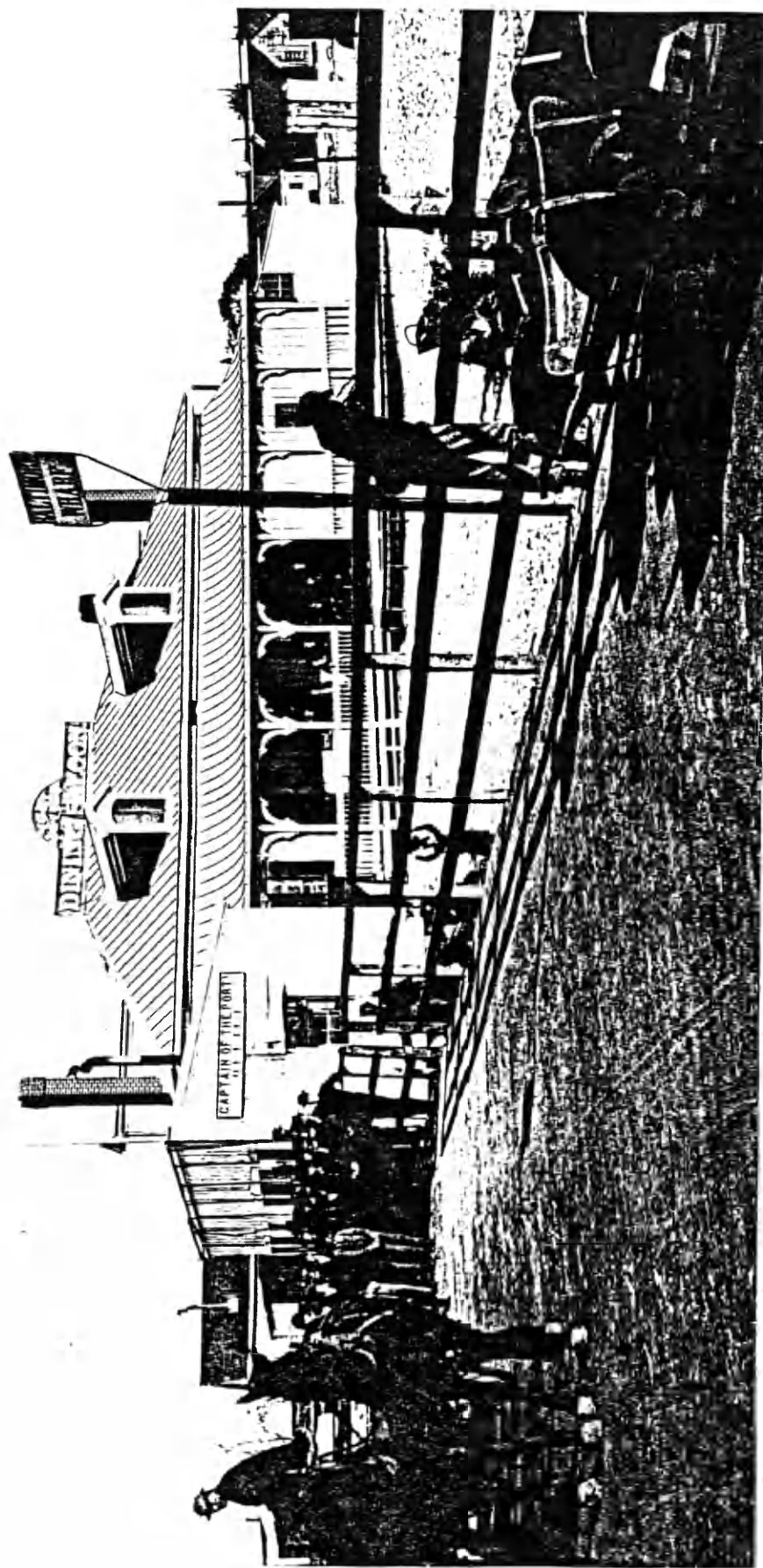


Figure 11. This restaurant, the Hygeia Dining Saloon, was erected in 1863 near the Baltimore Wharf at Old Point Comfort for the benefit of transient officers (Burkhart Collection).

Norris attempted to enlarge his restaurant to hotel capacity but his application to the Secretary of War was denied. Under date of December 24, 1866, the Chief of Engineers expressed his disapproval of the scheme stating, "the convenience of visitors to Fort Monroe would be reasonably met by a hotel on the side of Mill Creek opposite to the work" (47-2: Senate Report 966).

During Norris' ownership the small frame building grew in size, eventually accepting overnight guests. One patron of the establishment in 1866 was Sarah S. Carter. After sleeping in the boat on which she and her companions were traveling, she wrote, "We breakfasted at the Hygeia House, dreadfully dirty, but pretty good. The dining room is much finer than the rest of the house with its marble floor and walls of varnished wood. The windows command a view of the Bay and we saw a huge, black ship. Looking through the windows of the parlor we saw a fence rail swarming with colored men basking in the sun" (Burkhart Collection: Virginia State Historical Society Documents).

After the death of Norris, his wife Maria sold interest to Henry Clark and Sheldon S. Pratt for \$6500 (Elizabeth City County Deed Book 2:114). Full interest was gained by Clark in 1869, having purchased Pratt's interest for \$8,800 (Elizabeth City County Deed Book 2:115). On January 4, 1868, Clark applied for permission to the Secretary of War to enlarge the building which had already become known as the

Hygeia Hotel. The Secretary denied his application on January 29, 1868, with no reason assigned (Burkhart Collection: National Archives Documents). An undaunted Clark kept trying. A joint resolution was passed by the 40th Congress, June 25, 1868, authorizing Clark to "enlarge the said hotel in such a manner as may be compatible with the interests of the United States." In that resolution it is

Provided, That such enlargement, or any building hereafter erected by any person or persons upon the lands of the United States at Fortress Monroe, shall be at once removed, at the expense of the respective owners, whenever the Secretary of War shall deem such removal necessary, and no claim for damages shall be made upon the government of the United States: And provided further, That the building so to be enlarged shall be subject to taxation under State and national authorities the same as other property.

Articles of agreement were signed by Clark and Major General William F. Barry, commander of the post on September 29, 1868 (57-2: Senate Report 2836).

Specifically, the agreement allowed Clark

to increase the grand plan 113 feet 10 inches along the wharf in the direction of the present front of the house, thence in a line with the quartermasters storehouse, and the fence of the engineers cottage, 92 feet 2 inches, thence in a line parallel to the South end of the Quartermasters storehouse 112 feet to the place of beginning. That he may add a second story to the present building and to such extension of it as he may make may also build with these limits privy, kitchen and icehouse.

In 1871, Joseph Segar and Caleb C. Willard, the owners of the original Hygeia Hotel which had been torn down, were granted permission by the Secretary of War to construct a

hotel on the public grounds of Fort Monroe on a site selected by the Engineer Department. It was recommended by that department that such a site be as near to Mill Creek Bridge as possible (47-2: Senate Report 966). Disgruntled over the loss of their first Hygeia enterprise, Segar and Willard filed suit with the government claiming \$30,000 in damages incurred from the destruction of the first Hygeia Hotel (3 Congressional Record 2:885). In consideration of this, it was stated that no rent for the land for the new hotel would be charged to the owners. Articles of agreement were prepared for Segar and Willard containing the same provisions as their original agreement of 1857. Willard expressed his intention to build in 1882, Segar having died, but was informed by the Secretary of War that the permission granted for such enterprise was done so with no authority, the present Hygeia Hotel having gained its permission through joint resolution of Congress (57-2: Senate Report 2836).

Clark and Wilson were attempting to restore the new Hygeia Hotel to its pre-Civil War fame. The hotel "was filled during the winter months with people from the North, and in the warm weather the Southerners began to drift back to their old summer quarters, although they did not like the memories associated with the fort. As all overcrowded hotels are apt to do, this one fell into bad repute. The food provided was poor and the attendance bad" (Harper's Weekly March 8, 1884:159).

Many northern resorts were established after the Civil War - such as Naranngasett, Atlantic City, and Cape May. Despite this competition and the floundering hotel, the "salubrity" of the climate continued to attract visitors. It is interesting to note that Old Point Comfort was as far north as many Southerners would travel. Coincidentally, it was also as far south as many Northerners felt comfortable.

On January 2, 1872, Clark formed a partnership with John E. Wilson (Elizabeth City County Deed Book 3:260). Permission to occupy a larger part of public ground and make an addition to the already present building was granted to Clark and Wilson by the Secretary of War on January 20, 1872. Articles of agreement were signed by Clark and Major W.P. Craighill (57-2: Senate Report 2836).

The new addition was to be a four-story tin-roofed structure directly in front of the existing building. Clark and Wilson used the property as collateral in trust deeds to secure the loans needed for the undertaking. On January 2, 1872, they contracted with a W.H. Allen to build the new hotel for \$18,500. Alterations to the existing building were also made. A partial listing of the expenses involved follows:

July 1st	
28 days Bricklayer Extra 5.00	\$141.13
4 extra rooms 4th story 25.@	100.00
3 extra rooms 3rd story 30.@	90.00
stairs in 3rd story	25.00
cutting off cornice and put inside sash	25.00
L Balance thick glass	108.00
Linching piazza floor, also for guttering chimney caps	228.00

Pipes in kitchen and labor on old house	100.00
3 extra doors 2nd story	90.00
Cutting through two rooms and room plastering for covered way	70.00
1 extra door 1st story	30.00
320 yards additional plastering	96.00
Building water closet as per contract	300.00
Additional labor in framing in floors for gallery etc.	25.00
5 days carpenter work Barber shop	17.50
47 days carpenters work gas house	164.50
48 ft. lumber	1.44
300 ft. lumber 3X4	9.00
5000 shingles	70.00
(Burkhart Collection: Elizabeth City County Court Records).	

The "new" Hygeia Hotel erected by Clark and Wilson was in the Second Empire style, which invited much detail and elaboration (Figure 12). The wooden structure was girdled with a single-story veranda on each of its three levels. The columns of support were small and thin, in contrast to the massive ones of the first Hygeia Hotel. The columns looked more like scaffolding than like roof-supporting structures. There was a corner tower that marked the entrance to the lobby, now a separately designated area. A fringe of rooms had been built around the roof edge of the older building.

The hotel was said to be able to accommodate 200 people with its enlargement and to have had bathing facilities. It was offered as a "mecca for clean people," but as a hotel it was failing due to financial problems - which, according to some, were ultimately due to inept management (The Daily Press March 22, 1970). The whole matter was complicated by a severe

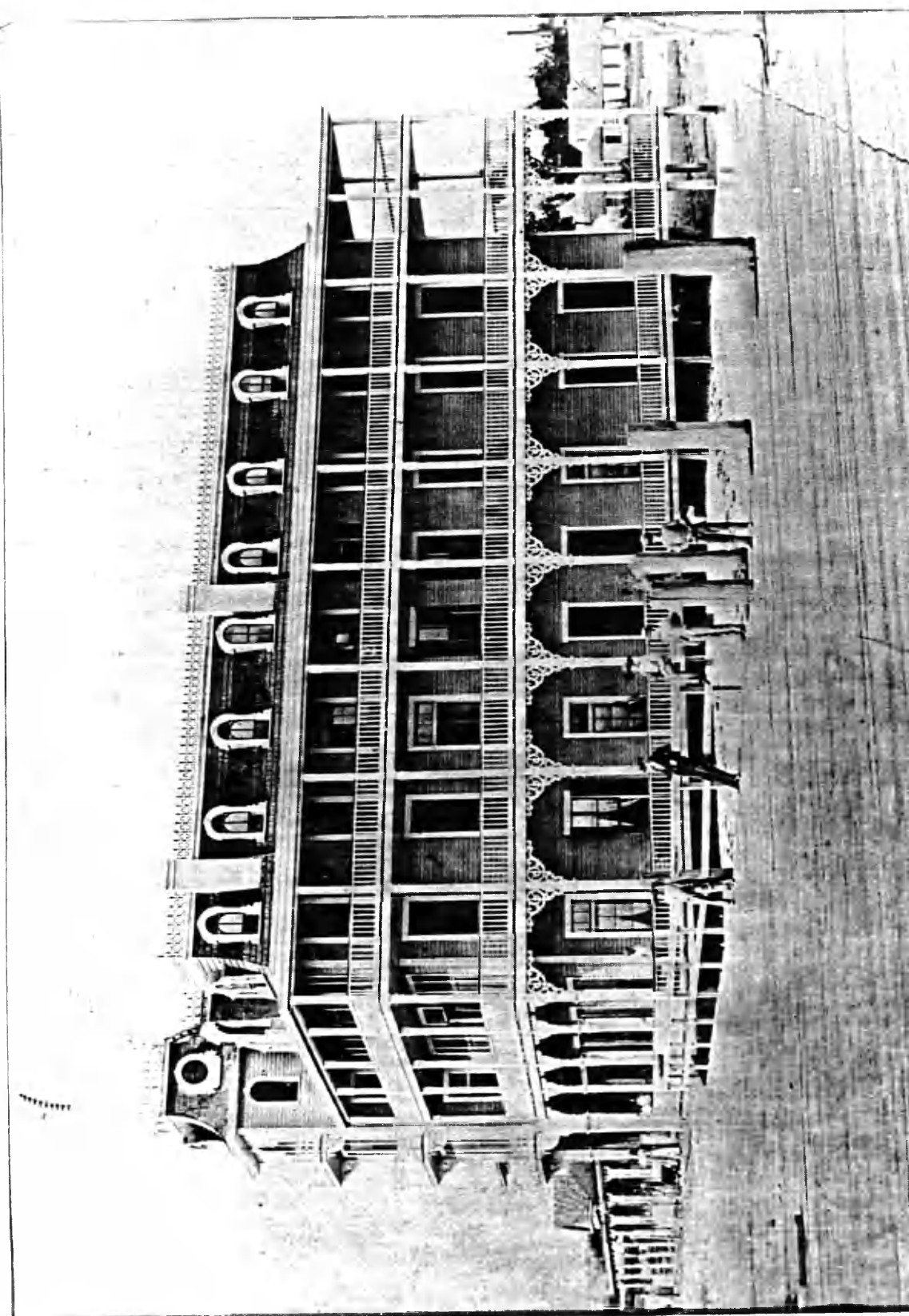


Figure 12. A four story tin roofed addition in the Second Empire style was erected in front of the saloon in 1872 by Clark and Wilson. By this time the establishment was operating as a hotel (Burkhart Collection).



storm in the winter of 1872 that caused extensive damage to the wooden veranda, which was built on posts, and to the brick foundation (Burkhart Collection: Elizabeth City County Court Records). Money in the amount of \$1500 was borrowed from Samuel Shoemaker (with Harrison Phoebus as trustee) and Thomas Kelsa (Elizabeth City County Deed Book 3:83 and 185). By that time there was a lengthy list of even more creditors.

On November 22, 1873, Clark and Wilson conveyed the "four story tin roof building known as the Hygeia Hotel" to G. S. Griffith, Harrison Phoebus, and Thomas Tabb as trustees for the creditors whose claims and liabilities totaled over \$8,500. A partial list of the contents of the Hygeia Hotel held as assets follows:

Contents of the Hygeia Hotel 1873

- 40 large double Walnut Bedsteads
- 28 single walnut bedsteads
- 52 marble top walnut bureaus
- 54 marble top walnut wash stands
- 13 walnut wardrobes
- 16 walnut racks
- 50 large double hair mattresses
- 30 single double hair mattresses
- 135 pillows
- 55 bolsters
- 35 large bed springs
- 25 small bed springs
- 17 walnut tables
- 13 large dining
- 2 billiard tables
- 1 piano
- 140 spreads
- 12 large stools
- 2 large mirrors
- Bar and bar fixtures
- 1 cooking range and utensils
- 2 parlor sets of furniture
- 46 chamber carpets
- 1 parlor carpet

(Elizabeth City County Deed Book 3:436).

By order of the circuit court, the hotel was to be sold by the trustees at public auction. Clark remained as manager until that time. The following article appeared in several newspapers:

By John B. Roberts, Auctioneer, Hampton, Va.

VALUABLE HOTEL PROPERTY  
FOR SALE AT FORT MONROE, VA.

By virtue of a certain deed of trust executed to me as trustee, by Henry Clark, bearing date June 5, 1873, which said deed is duly of record in the clerk's office of the county of Elizabeth City. I will sell at public auction on the premises, at Fort Monroe, Va., on the 6th day of December 1873, between the hours of 12 o'clock and 3 o'clock P.M., the property conveyed by said deed, which is therein described as follows, to-wit:  
The four-story frame, tin-roof building known as the

HYGEIA HOTEL,  
situated on the United States Government lands, at Fort Monroe, Va.

Terms of sale: \$12,000 cash. A reasonable credit will be given for the residue, the terms of which will be known on the day of the sale.

H. PHOEBUS  
Trustee

(Burkhart Collection: personal manuscript).

For some reason the sale was delayed. A copy of a later ad prepared for the newspapers of Baltimore read:

The Hygeia Hotel, Fort Monroe Va., will be sold on Thursday the 9th of April 1874 at 11 o'clock...the hotel buildings are constructed in the best manner and are capable of accommodating 200 guests - all the appointments of the establishment are of the first class. It is furnished throughout in the most elegant manner. The franchises pertaining to the property are of very great value being entirely free from all taxation whatever and virtually exempt from competition. The Hygeia hotel is not only a summer resort of great popularity, but can be conducted most profitably during the entire year... (Burkhart Collection: Maryland Historical

Society Documents).

There were only two bids during the auction, both surprisingly low. David Keener from Baltimore bid \$20,000 and \$27,000 was bid by John M. West of Petersburg, an agent of the Old Dominion Line of Steamers. Mr. West was acting on behalf of Samuel Shoemaker of Baltimore, vice president of the Adams Express office where Harrison Phoebus was employed as a clerk. Mr. Keener was Mr. Shoemaker's personal secretary. The property was deeded to West on April 9th, and assigned to Shoemaker the next day (Elizabeth City County Deed Book 4:94). The property was then leased to Phoebus on April 29th for \$2400 per year with a five year renewal option lease. Clark and Wilson were upset over the proceedings, claiming a conspiracy on the parts of Shoemaker and Phoebus to elicit low bids for the property. A suit was brought to court but eventually was dismissed. The commissioners found that the \$27,000 was a fair amount. It was the minimum bid that could be accepted for the hotel, allowing the creditors 50 cents on the dollar (Burkhart Collection: Elizabeth City County Court Records).

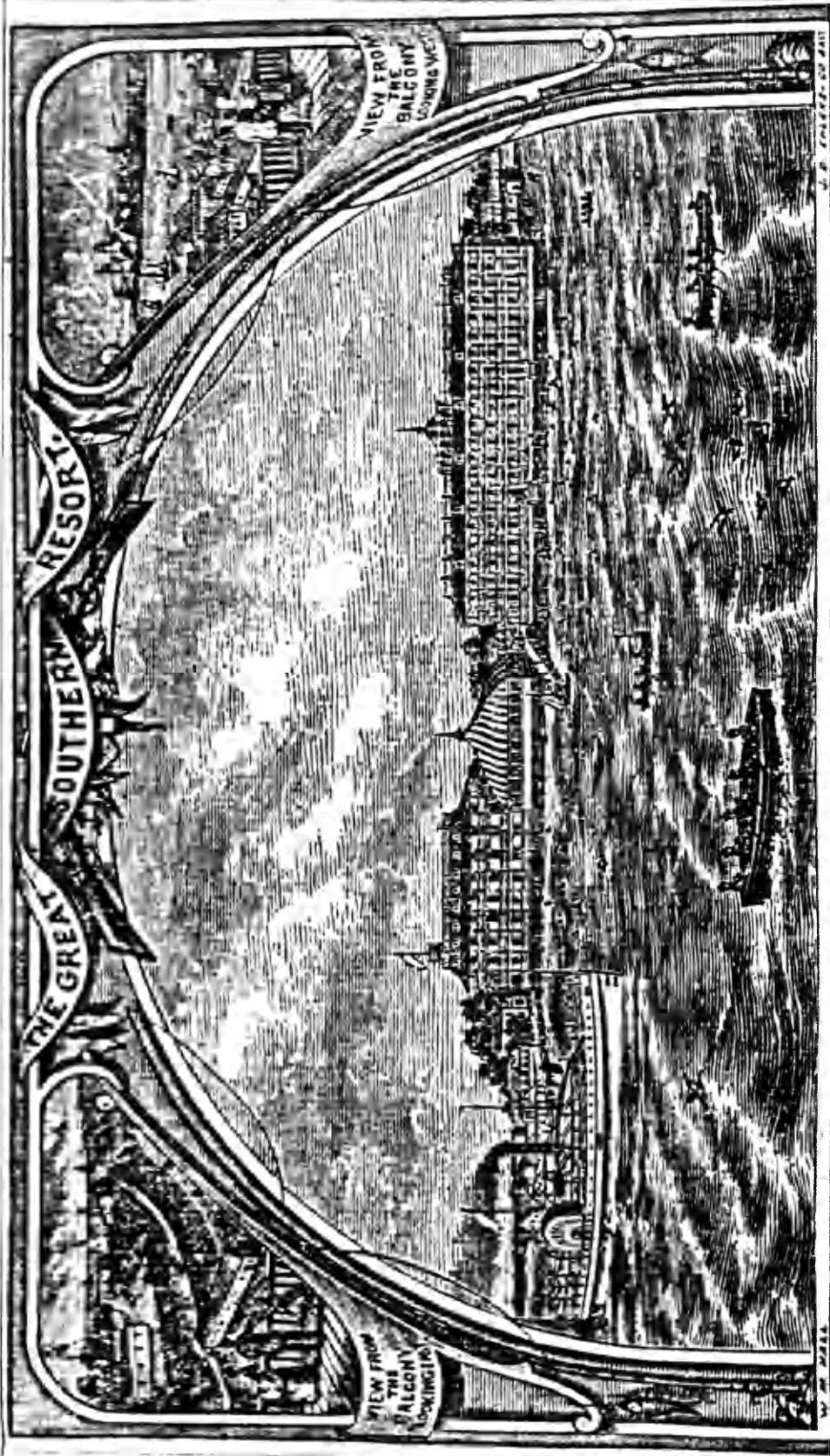
Phoebus had no prior hotel experience but he had been successfully involved in various business activities and was aware of the mistakes made by Clark and Wilson. With the financial backing of Samuel Shoemaker, he began his adventure in the hotel business by traveling to other hotels and resorts, studying new methods of management, technological

devices and improvements.

Phoebus found that often the success and popularity of a hotel were measured by the scale of the building. The modest building of 1874 contained ample provisions but Phoebus had much grander ideas. His motto was: "I will have the best hotel of its kind in the country. And I will let the country know it" (Casemate Museum Papers No.10).

On November 12, 1874, in a letter to Brigadier General A.A. Humphreys, Shoemaker requested permission to expand and enlarge the hotel. Permission was asked to tear down several old dilapidated buildings which stood on the north side of the two-story portion of the main building and to erect in their place a two-story tin roof building. Also requested was permission to erect an ice house and to occupy more of the government lands east of the present structure running along the water's edge as the site for a one story frame bowling alley building (3 Congressional Record 2:1234). The request was entered in the form of a bill to Congress and permission granted February 19, 1875 subject to the conditions of the 1868 joint resolution.

Bachelder's 1875 guide to summer resorts gives the Hygeia Hotel good ratings. It finds the situation of the new structure far superior to that of the old, "which was patronized by many of the best of our people from all sections of the Union" (240-241). Bathing, boating, and fishing were listed in the guide as the main activities (Figure 13).



## THE HYGEIA HOTEL,

OLD POINT COMFORT, VA.

H. PHOEBUS, PROPRIETOR.

Figure 13. This advertisement promoted the Hygeia Hotel as "The Great Southern Resort." The groined roof pavilion and multi-storied addition on the right were erected in 1875 (Burkhart Collection).

Phoebus, in fulfillment of the second part of his creed, promoted the Hygeia Hotel in advertisements as "a resort for the pleasure-seekers and invalids, and as a resting-place for tourists on their way to Florida or to the North....Invigorating atmosphere and mild temperature especially adapted to that class who seek the genial winter of the South and the cool summer of the North....The climate unequaled in salubrity....malarial fevers absolutely unknown...For sleeplessness and nervousness the delicious tonic of the pure ocean air and the lullaby of the ocean waves rolling up on the sandy beach but a few feet from the bed-room windows are the most beautiful soporifics at the Hygeia" (Chamberlin Museum Display and Summer Homes on the Norfolk and Western 1882:71).

The hotel was sold to Harrison Phoebus by Shoemaker for \$58,000 on July 10, 1876, without asking recognition or obtaining consent of the War Department to transfer (Arthur 1930:235). Shoemaker maintained his close association with Phoebus and the hotel. He continued to be listed as owner in government documents and made applications to obtain permission for the hotel's various expansions as such. Phoebus wrote to his friend weekly, sometimes daily.

On October 13, 1877, the Secretary of War approved the application of Mr. Shoemaker to remove some of the hotel buildings and rebuild in a more commodious manner (57-2: Senate Report 2836). These enlargements were completed in the

next year.

The James River Tourist commented on the hotel (1878:43):

It has accommodations for 600 guests, and has all modern improvements--gas and electric bells in every room, bath rooms on each floor, elevator , etc. Ten or fifteen steamers land at the wharf each day, except Sunday...The beach at Old Point Comfort is beautiful. It is hard and smooth, and the shore declines into the water so gradually that bathers may secure any depth they may desire. The surf dashes almost up to the hotel steps--a great advantage, as the ladies can walk from the dressing room in the hotel right out into the water. There is no undertow, and no dangerous current to excite the fears of accident, while the water is as salty and strong as in mid-ocean. The guests enjoy the bathing free from any restrictions except the conventional bathing dress.

By 1880, the Hygeia Hotel was low and horizontal with verandas running the entire length for each of its stories (Wertenbaker 1931:324). Occupying a very narrow site, the hotel was actually a series of buildings tied together by a boardwalk (Figure 14). The main building housed the lobby, bar and billiard room, and the other public rooms, including the dining room, ball room, and parlor. Windows were open to the waterscape so that there was a great awareness of the outside even from the inside. Six hundred guests could be accommodated with the furthest guest room being 1,380 feet from the registry office (Squier 1885:169).

From A Monograph on Old Point Comfort, Virginia, written by Harrison Phoebus, is this description of the reception upon arrival (1880:12-13):

At another watering-place, we should have been met by a crowd of vociferous hackmen, bawling hotel porters, and other terrible creatures whose pursuit

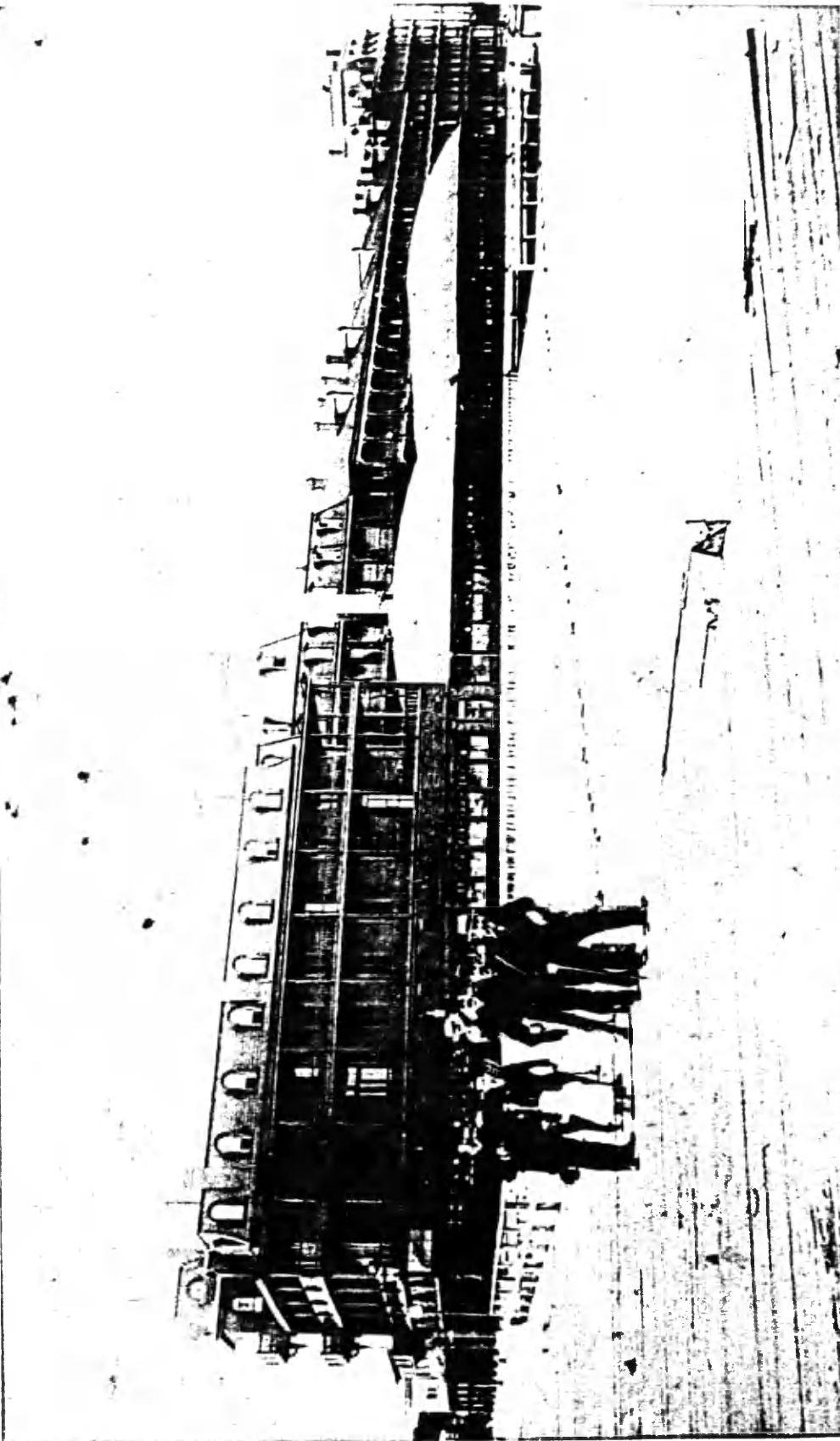


Figure 14. The Hygeia Hotel was extended along the waterfront as various additions were made under the direction of Harrison Phoebus, reputedly the moustashioed man in the foreground (Burkhart Collection).



in life is to lie in wait for the unwary traveler. But, wonder of wonders at this place not so much as a vender of peanuts importunes us to spend our money. A couple or more of blue-coated sentries are stationed at the wharf-head; a group of officers are chatting together, or may be watching for the debarkation of some expected friends. A solitary porter, sable, respectful, voiceless save when spoken to, stands ready with a hand truck to take our luggage; and consigning our chattels to the care of this reconstructed African, we stand watching until the boat's short stay alongside the wharf is concluded, and then saunter up to the hotel. Right at the end of the wharf stands our hostelry, so close that from the planking of the pier flooring to the flooring of the veranda one may step without even putting foot upon the ground. Of course, like experienced and provident travelers, we have telegraphed in advance of our coming to secure rooms; the efficient hotel clerk consigns us without parley to the guidance of an attendant; and following this sable Mercury along corridors and up the smooth working elevator, we come at length to our room.

After seeing the room which "fronts upon the Bay," and watching "the stowing away of our belongings," the monograph describes the various activities to be enjoyed: salt water bathing, sailing, fishing, touring Hampton, the Soldiers' Home, the Rip Raps, Hampton Institute and of course, the fort - among others (Phoebus 1880:15-16).

Following a "bountiful" dinner in which a "prominent part is played by the noble sheepshead," one might retire to the upper veranda from where it was possible to see the target-firing by the artillery school (Phoebus 1880:16). The hotel hop was the most anticipated event of the day, taking place in the ballroom (see Figure 15): "a spacious and lofty pavilion, with two sides open to the sea it combines the two

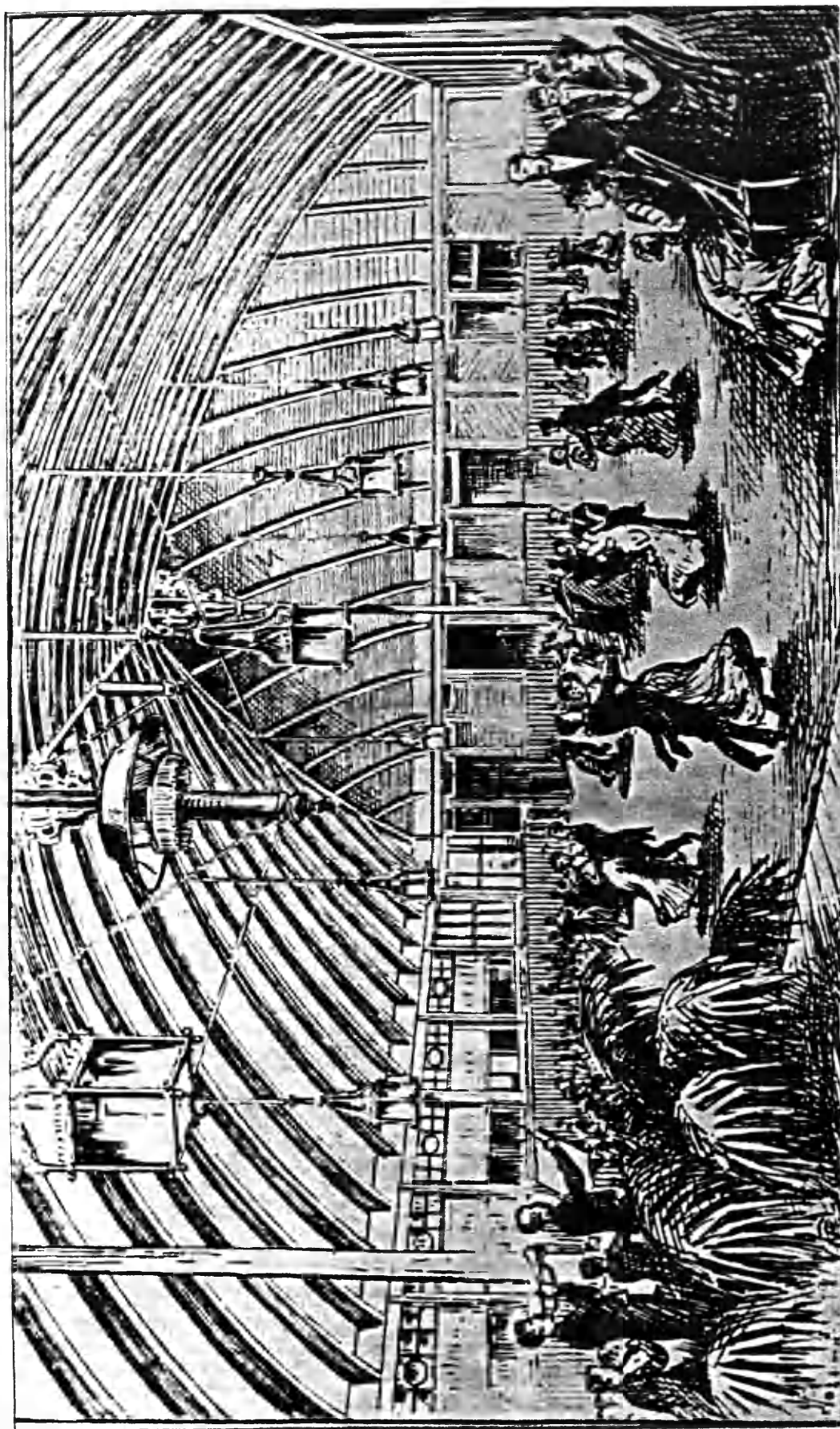


Figure 15. Dancing was a primary resort activity. Dancers whirled away under the groined roof of the ballroom of the Hygeia Hotel (Burkhart Collection).

great requisites of ample room, and cool fresh everchanging air. The waxed floor shines like a mirror...." Steamboats brought excursionists from Norfolk and the school of artillery "leads to the stationing here of some fifty army officers, who form no inconsiderable or unwelcome addition to the society congregated at the Hygeia" (Phoebus 1880:17).

It was remarked that even without the visitors from the fort, the Hygeia Hotel would not be such an "Adamless Eden" as the average resort hotel. It had always been as attractive to the "sterner" sex as to their wives and sisters. The procession of arriving guests showed as a rule, more men than women. Much as in the ante-bellum days of the first Hygeia Hotel, statesmen, leaving Washington on the night boat, could arrive in time for breakfast, then leave on the return journey the next evening (Life at the Hygeia Hotel 1900:2).

The hotel was host to President Grant and his niece Bessie Sharp. In March of 1881, they arrived via the C&O railroad which had lines to Newport News. In 1882, under the encouragement of Phoebus, the rail system expanded from Newport News to Chesapeake City. However, the most preferred form of arrival for the Hygeia Hotel's guests was the steamboat, which landed at the Baltimore wharf but a few feet from the hotel. A multitude of steamers of various lines provided service to guests arriving from New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Petersburg, and Richmond, as well as the more local points.

This famous "seaside resort" was known throughout the large population centers of the East. The summer success was surpassed only by that of its winter role as a sanitarium. This success was due largely to the talents of Phoebus. It was a well-known fact to his employees that he was familiar with every minutia of the hotel. He designed the various additions as well as all of the internal machinery, and personally supervised the construction and the installment of the gas, water, and drainage systems (Squier 1885:171-172). Yet even for such an energetic personality, the hotel industry could be difficult. Phoebus often vacillated between overwhelming urges to incorporate, expand, and increase accommodations and the urge to stop. In a letter to Shoemaker in April of 1881, he wrote:

If I have your consent I will advertise this property for sale: it is a fine chance for a capitalist to invest his money, as there is in the U.S. If I believed in partnership concerns I would take somebody in, but I don't not believe in them. They out not to exist in my judgement. Therefore I prefer if it can be done properly to get out of this thing at the earliest possible day, with what I can have left, I can go into some other business where I will have less care and responsibility, and live a happier and better life. The outlook is bright and promising - never was so much so: this convinces me: it is a good time to sell...if the thing will not bring 250,000 dollars I do not propose to let it go...I am so disgusted and disheartened with my help, that it seems if everything was out of joint. My waiters struck on me yesterday and it took 2 hours to effect a compromise. It is the hardest work I ever did in my life.... The pressure for room is not slacking in the least. There are people in the parlor now waiting for accommodations, and others have been telegraphed today not to come. This is first rate on its way but oh it is so trying (Burkhart

Collection: Maryland Historical Society Documents).

Phoebus went so far as to have several potential buyers look at the establishment but did not accept their offers. A short time later Phoebus was consumed with plans for a new addition and concerned over the attitudes of the military personnel of Fort Monroe as the hotel grew. It was noted by Phoebus that "nearly as many are coming from the south as from the north." The house continued to be busy that April, May, and June, important to Phoebus, for "the early spring business is what counts..the people who come here then have got money and are willing to pay for the solid comforts which I try to give them" (Burkhart Collection: Maryland Historical Society Documents).

The Secretary of War granted Mr. Shoemaker permission on May 21, 1881 to remove certain buildings of the Hygeia Hotel in order to erect others and to build a wharf (57-2: Senate Report 2836). The hotel was greatly enlarged and extended along the beach to the point of the present band stand and then away from the beach to the present line of officers quarters (Weinert and Arthur 1978:150).

Throughout its various enlargements (Figure 16), the hotel maintained the same double-barreled corridor plan, which by now was the standard in hotel design. Each room, with the exception of the rooms on the fourth floor over the dining room area, had "persienne" outer doors and access to the veranda. In this way, "The heat of the summer is mitigated

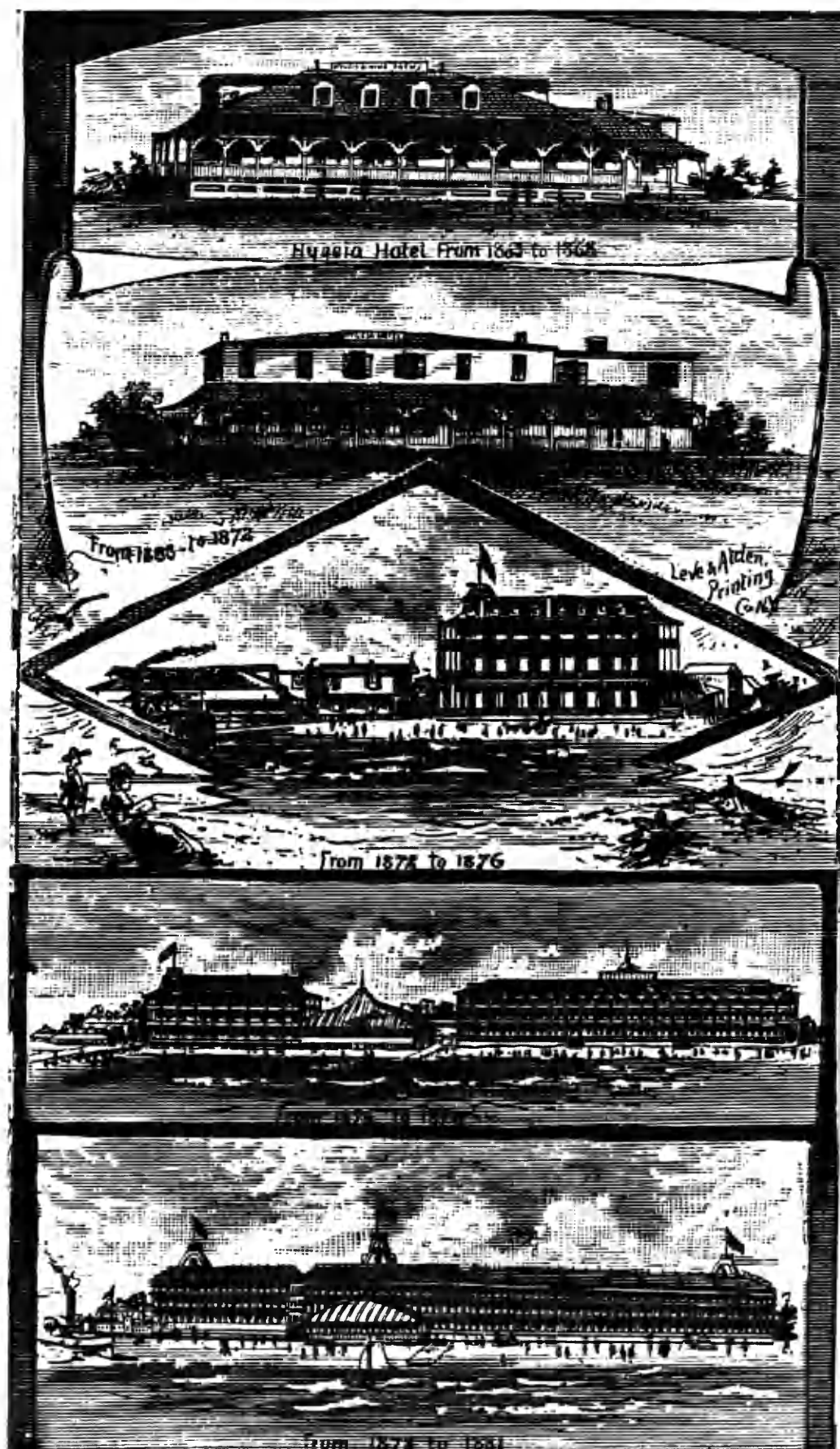


Figure 16. The Hygeia Hotel underwent a multitude of enlargements from 1863 to 1881 which transformed a simple restaurant to a sprawling resort complex (Burkhart Collection).

by the constant sea breeze and the superior ventilation of the building" (Summer Homes on the Norfolk and Western 1882:7).

In January of 1882, Phoebus was again depressed: "I find my finances at a low ebb and if the outlook was not so encouraging I should about throw up the sponge, but I am beginning to get some money and people are coming in faster than I can get ready for them." He was also progressing with plans to build a breakwater and bathing houses (Burkhart Collection: Maryland Historical Society Documents).

By the season of 1882, the hotel could accomodate 1000 guests. Glass had been mounted to enclose 15,000 square feet of verandas during the cold weather and a separate dining pavilion added (Figures 17 and 18). The terms were: Transient guests, \$3 per day; weekly guests, \$2.50 per day; monthly guests, \$2 per day. The average number of guests in January was 76: and by February 10th, 118 guests were registered. The guest count for March 4th was 365. According to Phoebus these numbers would "decrease to their lowest point and remain there" until the fall (Burkhart Collection: Maryland Historical Society Documents).

Harper's Weekly (March 8, 1884:159) stated that "the 'season' at the Hygeia Hotel is from the 1st of February to the last of April...Perhaps of all months January is the least attractive." With the new additions the hotel was described as "clean and almost luxurious."



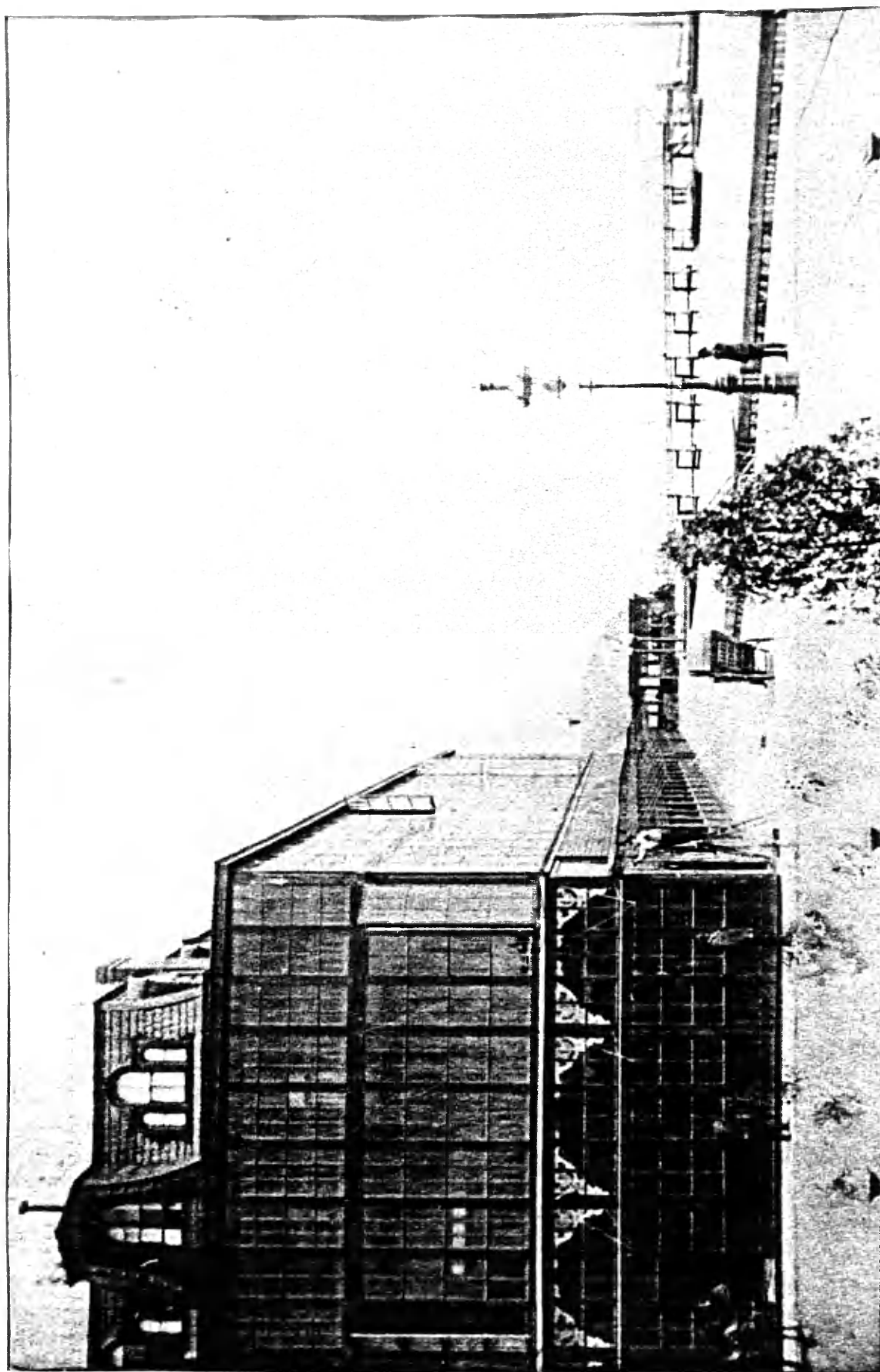


Figure 17. In 1882, glass was mounted to enclose the verandas on the 1872 addition. Guests were encouraged to sit "under the glass" to improve their health. This view was taken from Ingalls Road facing east (Burkhardt Collection).



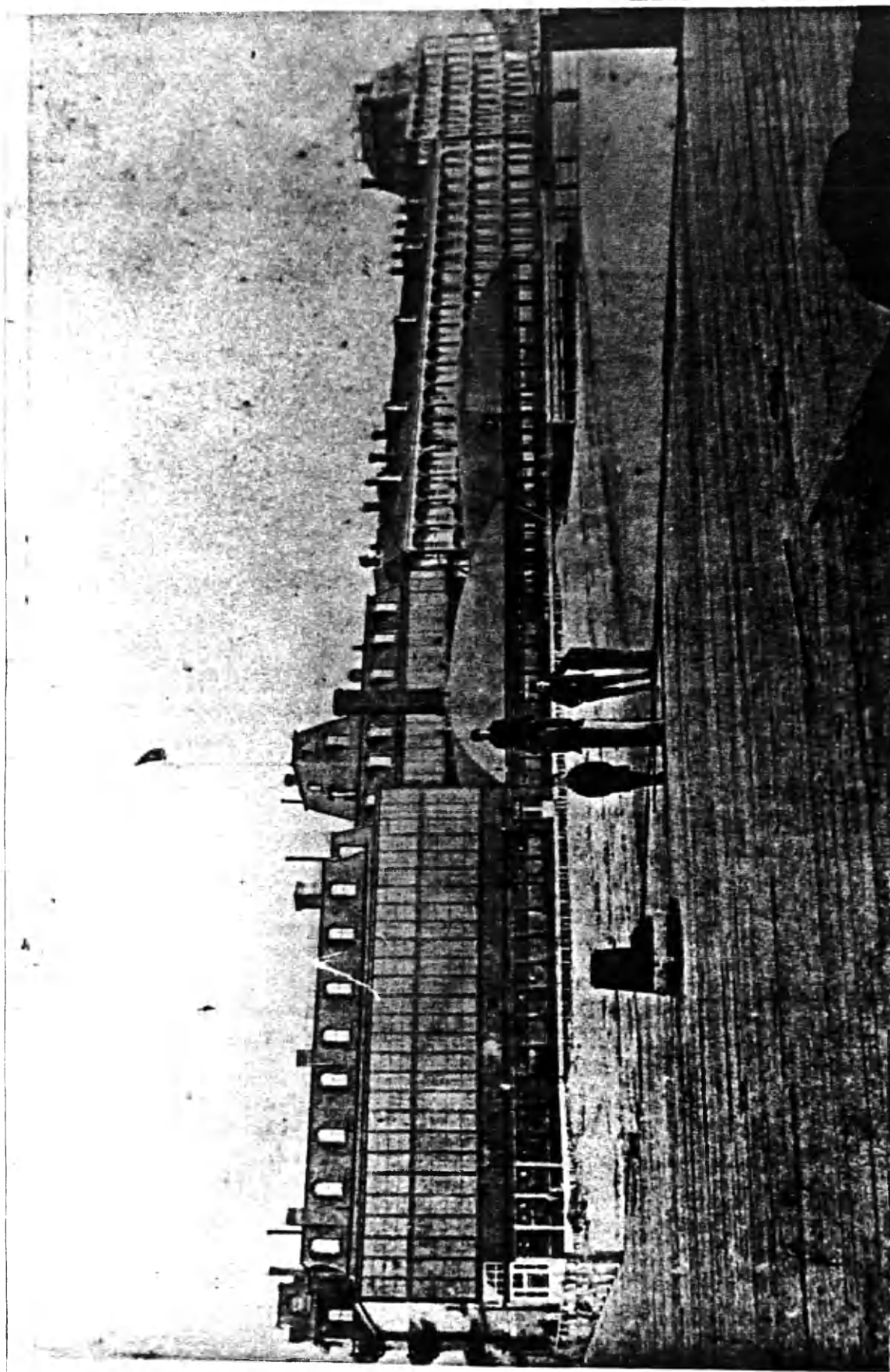


Figure 18. This photograph, taken from the wharf, shows the glassed-in verandas and the groined roofs of the dining and dancing pavilions. The 1884 four story addition is to the extreme right (Burkhart Collection).

Due to the success he was having with the Hygeia Hotel, Phoebus succeeded Col. Peyton as the manager of the White Sulphur Springs, a well-known resort in West Virginia (Virginian-Pilot September 7, 1902:5). But his role at the Hygeia Hotel continued. Plans were approved and permission granted on May 19, 1883 to Shoemaker to tear down the ice house, carriage house, servant's closets, and paint shop and to erect in their stead a building four stories in height to be used as a servants' quarters. Permission was granted once again in 1884 to Harrison Phoebus himself to make certain changes in some of the buildings (57-2: Senate Report 2836).

The 1884 additions cost \$150,000. The luxuries included in the hotel were hoped to make the word Hygeia synonymous with comfort, luxury, and good taste. The verandas encircling the buildings covered 35,000 square feet. The music and dancing pavilion was 7000 square feet. A portion of the pavilion extended right out over the water, which provided access to a small pier ending in a gazebo (Figure 19). The dining room (Figure 20) was now 60 by 150 feet and occupied a pavilion with a loft groined ceiling (The Home Bulletin of the Soldiers' Home December 5, 1885). The hotel boasted additional amenities: two Otis elevators, gas and electric bells or Creighton's Oral Annunciator in all rooms, and rooms for baths (public and private), and closets on every floor. It had the most highly perfected system of drainage of any hotel or public building in the country. Baths in the

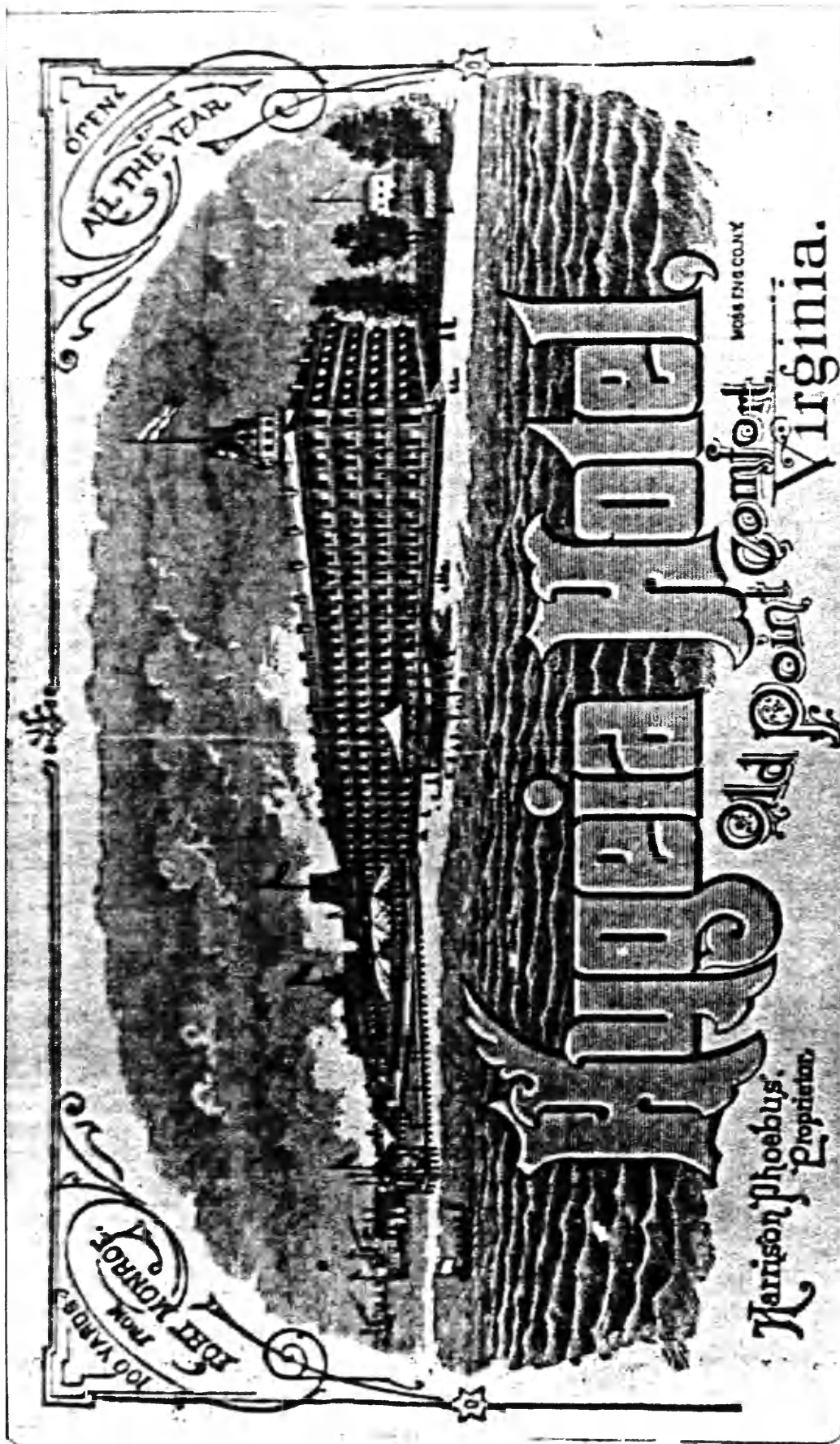


Figure 19. In this artist rendering, the Hygeia Hotel is shown extending along the waterfront as a continuous four story structure. The gazebo at the end of the pier was added in 1886 (Burkhart Collection).

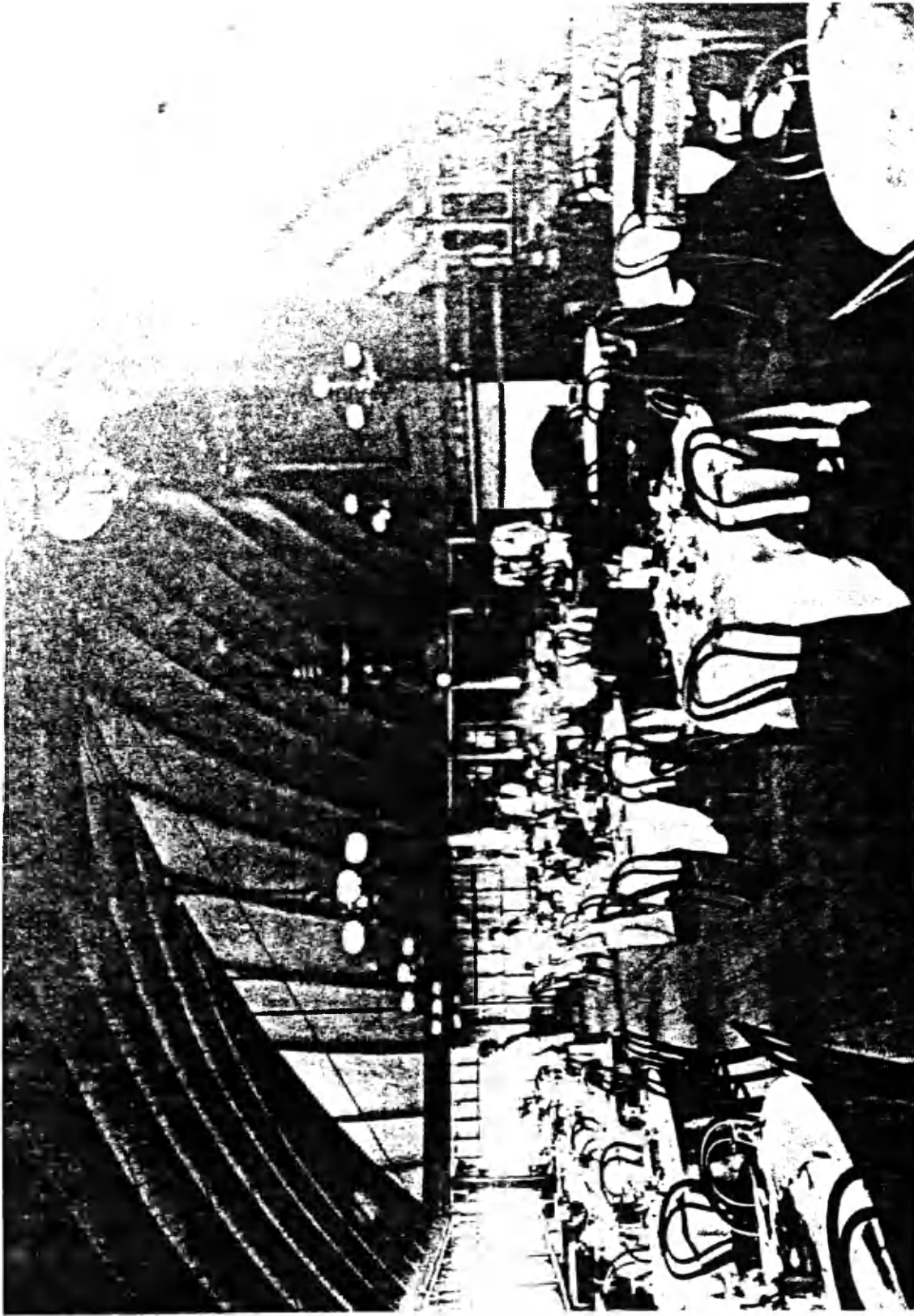


Figure 20. A massive fireplace rose from the center of the dining room. Guests dined under the groined roof on the "bounty of the sea" (Burkhardt Collection).

Turkish, Russian, Roman, thermo-electric, magnetic, and mercurial fashion had been added to complement the celebrated Hot Sea baths (The Home Bulletin of the Soldiers' Home December 20, 1884). The hotel was something of a little city with its dependent services housed on site.

On the east side of the wharf, the hotel now fronted 238 feet on the main road and 190 feet on the beach. The southwest corner was but a few yards inland from the present end of Ingalls road (Weinert and Arthur 1978:150). It was estimated that the hotel operations spent \$30,000 to \$40,000 per year in the community for labor and supplies and employed over 500 people (Southern Workman March 1886). Over 120 women were employed by the housekeeping staff alone (Squier 1885:172).

The Home Bulletin of the Soldiers' Home of January 31, 1885 reported that there were some changes at the Hygeia Hotel with the "introduction of cathedral glass for a distance of 500 feet in the windows along the front of the office, the gentlemen's reading room, the parlor, the dining room, the dancing rooms and the concert hall. Acres of brussels carpet have been laid, barrels of paint, kasomite and varnish have been used...."

The Hampton Monitor reported on the improvements (February 14, 1885):

The office of this palatial establishment is said to be the most elegant and complete in the country. the room is 30 x 100 feet. subdivided into general office, telegraph, ticket office, baggage room,

cloak room, private office for the proprietor, cashier's office etc. The walls are covered with papering of handsome design and the wainscoting, window frames and cornices around the room are of polished sherry. The window lights of the lower sash are of heavy ribbed glass and the upper of costly cathedral glass. In short, it is elegant, convenient, commodious.

The exterior walls were mirrored. Of great presence within the room was a "great tile chimney" with two open fireplace. Open fireplaces or steam radiators were located as heat sources in every room as well.

Harper's Weekly (March 8, 1884:159) commented:

A lofty and beautiful ball-room has been prepared for them, the largest in the country, with the single exception of the superb room in the Seventh Regiment Armory in New York. This spacious room is shaped like a musk-melon or a sea-shell, and a round, bell-like window provides plenty of air for the dancers - for indeed half of the room is window...The officers come in to enamel the scene with their brilliant uniforms. The band is excellent and plays every day

It was further described: "At too many resort hotels the so called ball room seldom feels the tread of twinkling feet. It is a great, echoing place dedicated to the occasional use of convention or to the slimly attended lecture....At Old Point Comfort people actually dance and enjoy themselves" (Life at the Hygeia Hotel 1900:3).

In back of the dancing pavilion was located the ladies' parlor, complete with tables for playing whist. The huge room was "luxuriously furnished, the walls wainscoted in polished cherry wherever the massive mirrors allow it." An immense triangular chimney with three open fireplaces; quaint brass

andirons, and sconces were elegant complements.

The concert hall on the second floor was used for private theatricals, concerts, lectures, receptions, and dinner parties. Its decorations and furnishings cost over \$13,000 (Squier 1885:169). Work was also done on the baths, which were increased to be 8 by 16 feet and 4 to 5 feet deep. They were marble-bottomed and nickel-lined (Figure 21).

The Home Bulletin of the Soldiers' Home of January 9, 1886 reported:

The Hygeia Hotel has had many tints and shades of paint as ever Joseph's coat could boast, all of which, we believe, put on by our enterprising Hampton painters Messrs. Boynton and Son. Their selections are always tasty and much admired. The last lick "takes the cake" for they've painted the hotel red.

With the additions and added amenities - and the Golden Age of Resorts now in progress - business was booming. The Hygeia Hotel's presence monopolized the hotel business at Old Point Comfort.

In 1885, an application was made regarding lease of land at Fort Monroe for the erection of a hotel by T.P. Pendleton & Co. However, no public need was established for such a hotel, and the proposal met with great resistance from the military commanders (47-1: House Report 1005). According to General Getty, the proposed hotel would mask an important front of the fort and render the quarters inside disagreeable. Furthermore, he felt that the traveling public was amply accommodated by the present Hygeia Hotel "which is much larger



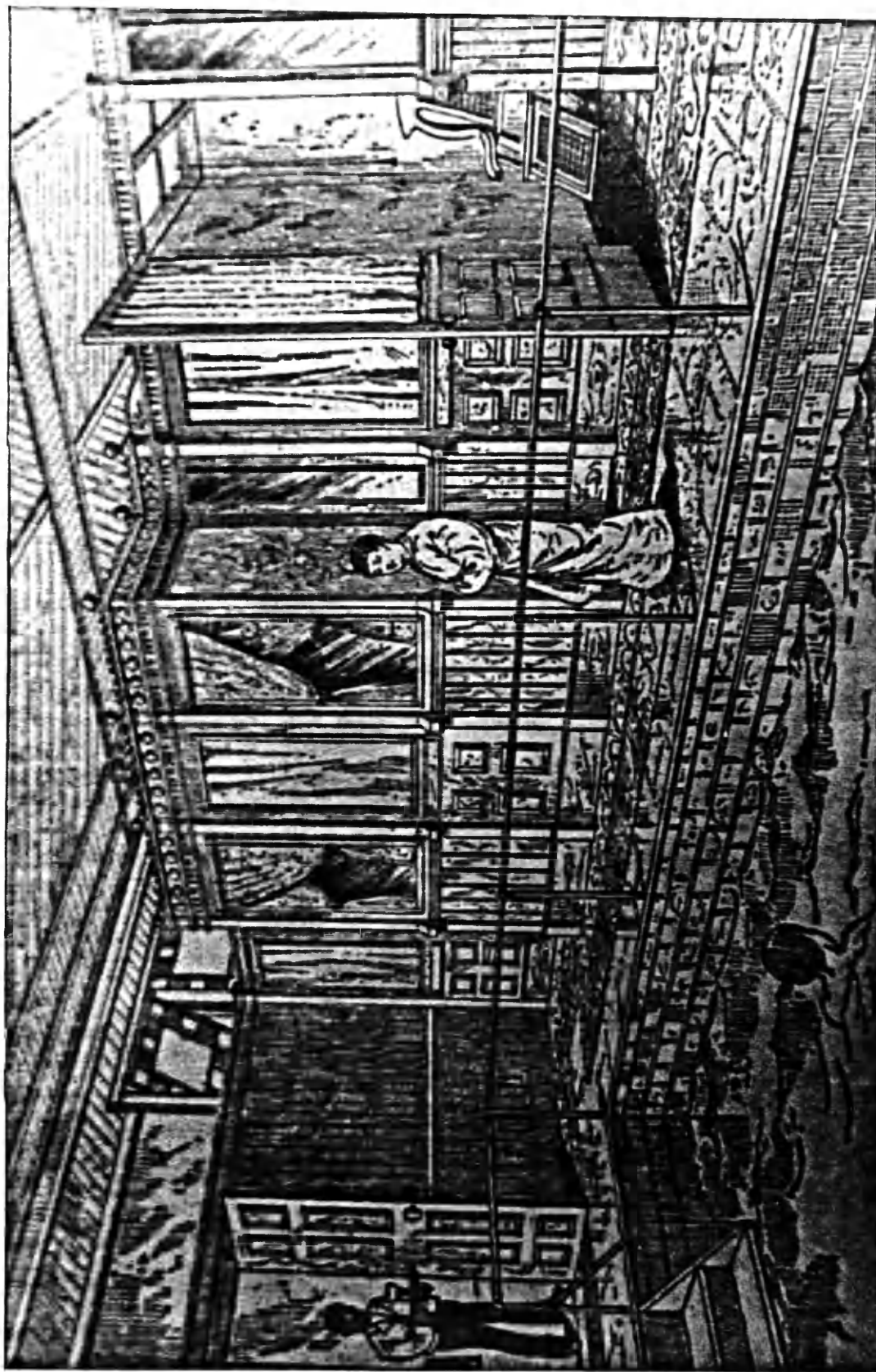


Figure 21. The therapeutic values of bathing had long been established as a featured attraction of resorts. This drawing shows a Hygeia Hotel guest emerging from a dressing chamber near the Plunge Bath (Burkhart Collection).



than such necessities have yet or are likely to exhibit demand for. The reasons urged for passage of the hotel erecting bill are imaginary." General Gilmore stated the ground the new hotel would occupy had been selected and approved on February 14, 1874 for a 10 gun sea coast battery for which no other site could be found (47-1: Senate Report 291). The bill did not pass.

Phoebus continued in his quest for innovation and perfection as the momentum of the business increased. In January of 1886 he was making arrangements to heat the parlor and the dining room with coils of hot water pipes. Struck down unexpectedly by a heart attack, Harrison Phoebus died on February 25, 1886.

Phoebus had left the hotel to his heirs but for some reason this matter was complicated. On February 12, 1887, by court decree, a special commission of P.T. Woodfin, R. Fultin, and Thomas Tabb were ordered to sell the hotel. The auction was held on April 7, 1887. Bidding started at \$300,000 by John M. West who had purchased the hotel 15 years before. A. D. Keener of Baltimore bid for Mrs. Phoebus (The Home Bulletin of the Soldiers' Home April 9, 1887). The hotel was sold for a high bid of \$352,000 to a syndicate of Mrs. Phoebus, a Mr. Schwarzwelden of Brooklyn, and three or four others who together formed the Hygeia Hotel Company, a joint stock company which was chartered April 27, 1887.

## OLD POINT COMFORT

By John W. Woodside

Respectfully dedicated to Mr. Harrison Phoebus,  
Proprietor of the Hygeia Hotel, Old Point Comfort,  
Virginia

At Old Point Comfort, on the sands,  
The Hotel Hygeia proudly stands.  
At the rear, within a short stone's throw,  
Are the frowning walls of Fortress Monroe,  
While the numerous ships with their precious loads,  
Whiten the waters of Hampton Roads.  
From North and South and east and west,  
The Sick and weary come for rest.  
Here the tired belle spends the Lenten days,  
To recruit her health and mend her ways,  
To walk and dance with the fortress beaux.  
To flirt a little and show her clothes.

The House itself dates back as far  
As the closing days of our civil war.  
And where now is gayety, life and fun,  
Once echoed the sound of the Rebel gun,  
And its spacious walls now full of life,  
Were once the theatre of bloody strife.  
Five hundred Rooms, with their downy beds,  
Can rest a Thousand weary heads;  
The Halls and Parlors are full of light;  
The dining rooms are clean and bright;  
And the Dancing Hall, enclosed in glass,  
Where a thousand feet can meet and pass;  
And the Fortress Band, in their suits of blue,  
Play all the tunes both old and new.  
The Billiard Room, with its doors ajar,  
Gives a glimpse of a spacious Bar.

Here all can throw away dull care,  
And live on the best of well-cooked fare.  
The Cherrystone oysters are food for fairies;  
The Butter is all from the "Big Elk Dairies."  
For Great men this is a favorite haunt,  
From P.T. Barnum to General Grant;  
And youth and beauty crowd its walls,  
And promenade in its spacious halls.

One striking feature, if not the best,  
Is Kimberly's jokes to each new guest;  
Each new arrival he entertains,  
And contributes much to Phoebus' gains.  
But the man the people like the most,

Is Phoebus, the Hygeia's genial Host,  
With the sweetest smile, and the kindest way,  
You love him more from day to day.  
On the Eastern Shore he was bred and born,  
And raised on Bacon, Greens and Corn.  
But one thing of him we are sure is true -  
"He is able to paddle his own canoe."

Part 3  
The Hotel Chamberlin  
1896-1920

The Hygeia Hotel had maintained a virtual monopoly on the Fort Monroe military reservation. A challenge to its dominance did not arise until 1886. In that year John F. Chamberlin applied to the United States government to erect a hotel on Old Point Comfort.

Chamberlin had been a gambler and throughout his life was identified with the "square sport" of gambling in one form or another, possessing the "honor" necessary to succeed on turf or green table. He established a reputation for probity even at gambling which eventually led to his success in the credibility and good standing of his commercial enterprises (The New York Times August 24, 1896).

Early in his career, Chamberlin was in partnership with Price McGrath operating a "club" in a brownstone front on 25th Street in New York City. The parlors and saloons of the club were the talk of the town. He was also involved in racing at Saratoga and became quite wealthy as the proprietor of a clubhouse in Long Branch, New Jersey, near the Monmouth Park

track. There, the wealthiest of visitors, such as Jay Gould, Jim Fisk, and George Pullman, were offered an evening retreat playing at elegantly equipped gaming tables and eating in lavish side rooms. The establishment was reminiscent of the resorts of Baden Baden, Hamburg and other palatial retreats of royal gamblers. There were no scandals and no fortunes were ruined. Reportedly, John Chamberlin ran the only really square game in America. He was trusted by many and his silence on other people's affairs earned him the title of "safest man" in the country (Watterson 1919:106).

Chamberlin was fond of horses, owning stable and stud farm. But he was overtaken by the "untoward vicissitudes" of the turf, losing \$75,000 in one race alone. He traveled to San Francisco where his luck did not change and returned to the East in poor financial condition, harmed further by the panic of 1873. New York had outlawed clubhouses. Gambling had become a criminal offense, so Chamberlin and his family set out for Washington D.C.

John Chamberlin had a pale, round Napoleonic face, neatly trimmed dark moustache, keen bright eyes, well-kept hair. His usual attire consisted of a Byronic collar, low-cost vest, and a notable absence of jewelry (The New York Times August 24, 1896). Chamberlin was described by his friend "Marse" Henry Watterson (1919:106) as "something of a problematic character, the type that fiction-mongers delight in" (Watterson 1919:106). Chamberlin was a persuasive yet invisible force.

As described by General Grant, a rather persuasive force in his own right, who frequented Chamberlin's clubhouse at Long Branch, "He did not ask for anything. He just told me what to do, and I did it" (Watterson 1919:107).

Using his persuasion to enlist the aid of friends, Chamberlin gained the restaurant privileges of the House of Representatives and obtained a suite of "elegant but cozy" buildings on Maryland Avenue. The establishment was called "Chamberlin's" and was "half clubhouse and half chophouse." Ladies were barred. Chamberlin quickly established his enterprise as the best eating place in town with charges "sky high and tip top" (Watterson 1919:106-107).

A great deal of money passed through Chamberlin's establishment, but he was not getting wealthy and was concerned for the future of his family. He conceived of the idea of a hotel at Old Point Comfort - a rival to the very successful Hygeia Hotel.

After his initial government application, Chamberlin was asked to supply further information. In reply he wrote the following:

Washington D.C. July 21, 1886

Sir: I reply to your note of inquiry of this date. I have the honor to inform you that if granted permission to build a hotel on United States lands at Fortress Monroe, Va., I propose to build, on such ground as may be designated by the proper military authorities, a first-class hotel, with all modern improvements and conveniences, to be kept open for the accommodation of the public all the year round, and of a class up to the standard of the very best summer resorts. The hotel will be of wood, but with fire proof corridors, stairways, and

halls, four and five stories in height, with elevators and to contain 350 rooms of all kinds. The construction of the hotel will be commenced immediately after the bill granting permission becomes law, and when completed will be under experienced and skillful management in all its departments to provide to its patrons every attention and comfort. I enclose herewith the ground plan and perspective of the hotel I propose to build.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,  
John F. Chamberlin  
(51-1: House Report 2373).

The bill was met with great opposition. Many objected to the continuance of leasing of government land for private enterprise. It was questioned as to what ulterior motives might surround Chamberlin and his associates.

It is difficult to determine if Chamberlin had the intentions of establishing another famed gambling house with the hotel at Old Point Comfort. The reasons for building the hotel, which were presented as an attempt to stop the monopoly of the Hygeia Hotel, were questioned by members of Congress. One Congressional member challenged, "Will there be any objection to inserting a clause against pooling?" The question was met with laughter (18 Congressional Record 3:1264). Supporters of the project defended, "It is a good place to have a hotel and John Chamberlin is a good man to keep it" (18 Congressional Record 3:2717). That declaration was met with laughter as well. Ultimately Chamberlin's influence prevailed and the bill was passed reading:

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Secretary of War be, and he is hereby, authorized to grant permission to John F.

Chamberlin to build a hotel upon the lands of the United States at Fortress Monroe, Virginia, upon such site and with such plans and dimensions as may be approved by the Secretary of War: Provided, That the State of Virginia, by its general assembly and governor, shall, by proper legal enactment, give the consent of said State to the erection of such hotel, and that the building or buildings erected shall be removed, at the expense of the owner or owners, whenever the Secretary of War shall so direct; and no claim for damages by reason of such removal shall be made upon the Government of the United States: And provided further. That the building so erected shall be subject to state and national taxation as other property (24 Statute 648).

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia confirmed the grant; and William J. Endicott, Secretary of War, approved the site plans (Elizabeth City County Deed Book 20:233).

After the death of Harrison Phoebus, the Hygeia Hotel was under the management of F.N. Pike, who continued to maintain the high standards set by Phoebus. An advertisement appearing in The Home Bulletin of the Soldiers' Home of July 1887 read: "The Great seaside resort....Preeminently a resort for southern people...pure ocean air, free from malaria and conducive to refreshing sleep....F.N. Pike manager." Pike continued improving the hotel and its success continued. The James River Tourist of 1889 wrote, "The best class of northern people assemble here in the winter, and of southerners in the summer months."

In promotional pamphlets (Pike nd:10) it was stated that the Hygeia Hotel possessed "a perfect system of ventilation



and drainage which empties about two miles away from the Hotel into the Chesapeake Bay." The dining rooms, parlors, and reading rooms were all lighted and ventilated by Seaman's Regenerative Gas Burners. The windows had heavy curtains to protect even the most delicate. Pike later went on to become the manager of The Royal Palace in Atlantic City as well (The Resorter September 1900:35).

In 1888, an attempt was made to attain permission for yet another hotel on Old Point Comfort. "The need of a hotel at Old Point Comfort, where people of moderate means may resort, has long been felt....There is no good reason why those whose means prevent them from seeking the expensive entertainment of a first class hotel should be denied the pleasure of occasionally visiting this charming spot, with its mild and salubrious climate" (50-1: House Report 2943). Permission was not granted. In 1890 the Congress considered the application of J.C. Asbury for permission to erect a small hotel for "colored people" at the extreme point of land on the land side towards Hampton. That area, "being remote from the white hotels," was located in the rear and was in no way an obstruction from the military point of view (51-1: House Report 887). However, due to financial problems and local resistance, the plan was not executed.

Chamberlin, proceeding with his hotel project, turned to his friend Watterson for financial help stating, "I want to sell this franchise to some man or company, rich enough to

carry it through. All I expect is a nest egg for Emily and the girls" (Watterson 1919:108). Watterson was unable to lend himself but attempted to aid in the finding of backers. He approached several leading men of the time; but, for various reasons, all refused.

According to Watterson, "Finally, here and there, literally by piecemeal, he got together money enough to build and furnish the Hotel Chamberlin" (Watterson 1919:110). But the road to success was very difficult for John Chamberlin.

The hotel was designed by Smithmeyer and Pelz, the firm which designed the Library of Congress. The actual design of the work and drawings were by Pelz, with Smithmeyer taking charge of the execution of the work (Spofford 1893:247). Recent technologic innovations and improvements were incorporated into this design (Figure 22). The Hotel Chamberlin was to be a complete city with its own ice plant, laundry, heating apparatus, and electric light plant (The Daily Press March 8, 1920:1).

The architecture of the Hotel Chamberlin was in the Queen Anne style. This style was characterized by "a picturesque roof line broken by gable, pediment and chimney stack." As executed in the Hotel Chamberlin this took the form of two great square towers at either end and a deep sloping roof (Figure 23). Other elements of the Queen Anne style included in the hotel's design were: flattened arches and an abundance of ornamentation, height, and verticality. Windows, often

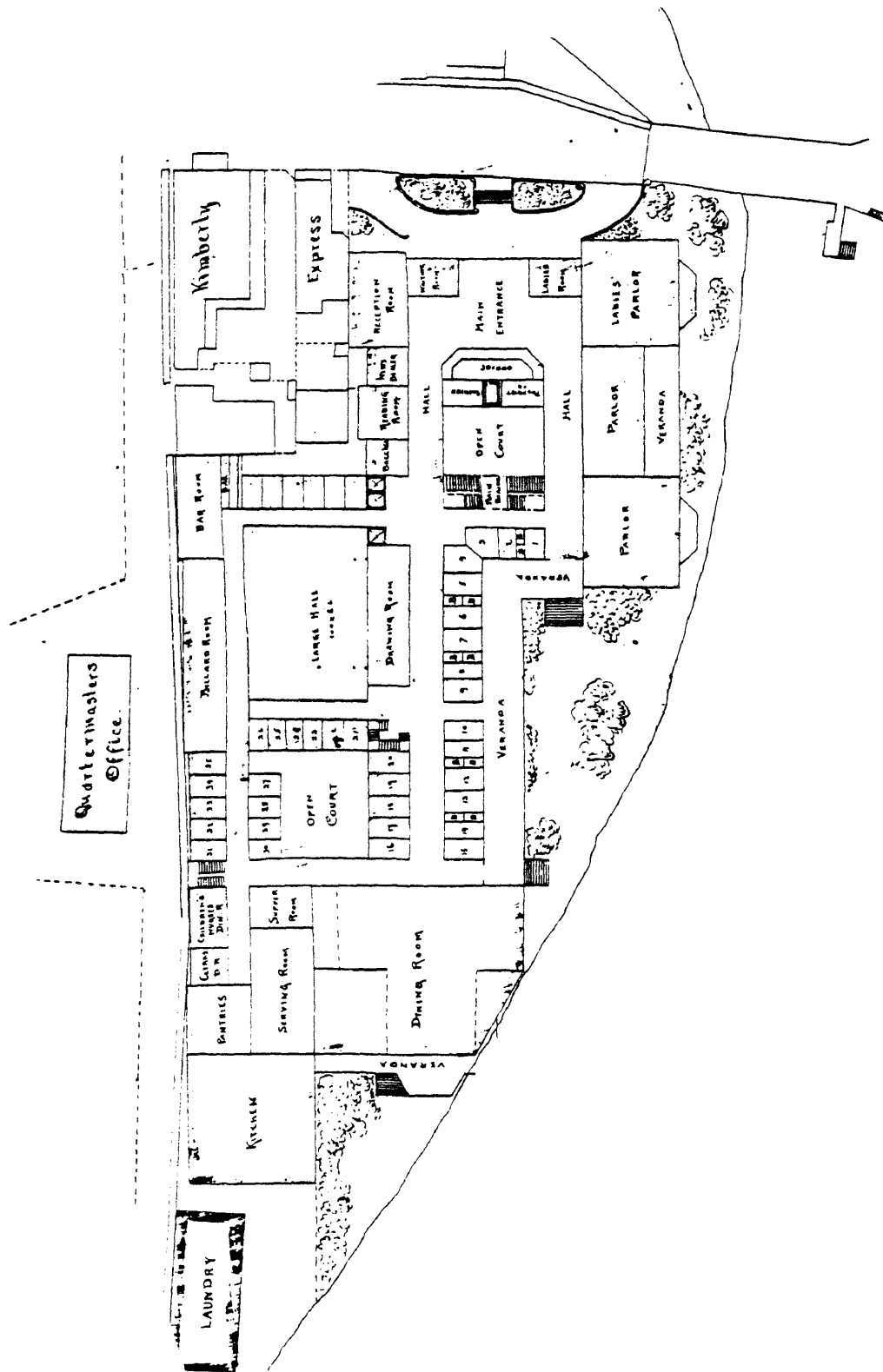


Figure 22. This rendering was entered into the Elizabeth City County Deed Book and shows the location of the many public areas of the first floor of the Hotel Chamberlin (Burkhardt Collection).

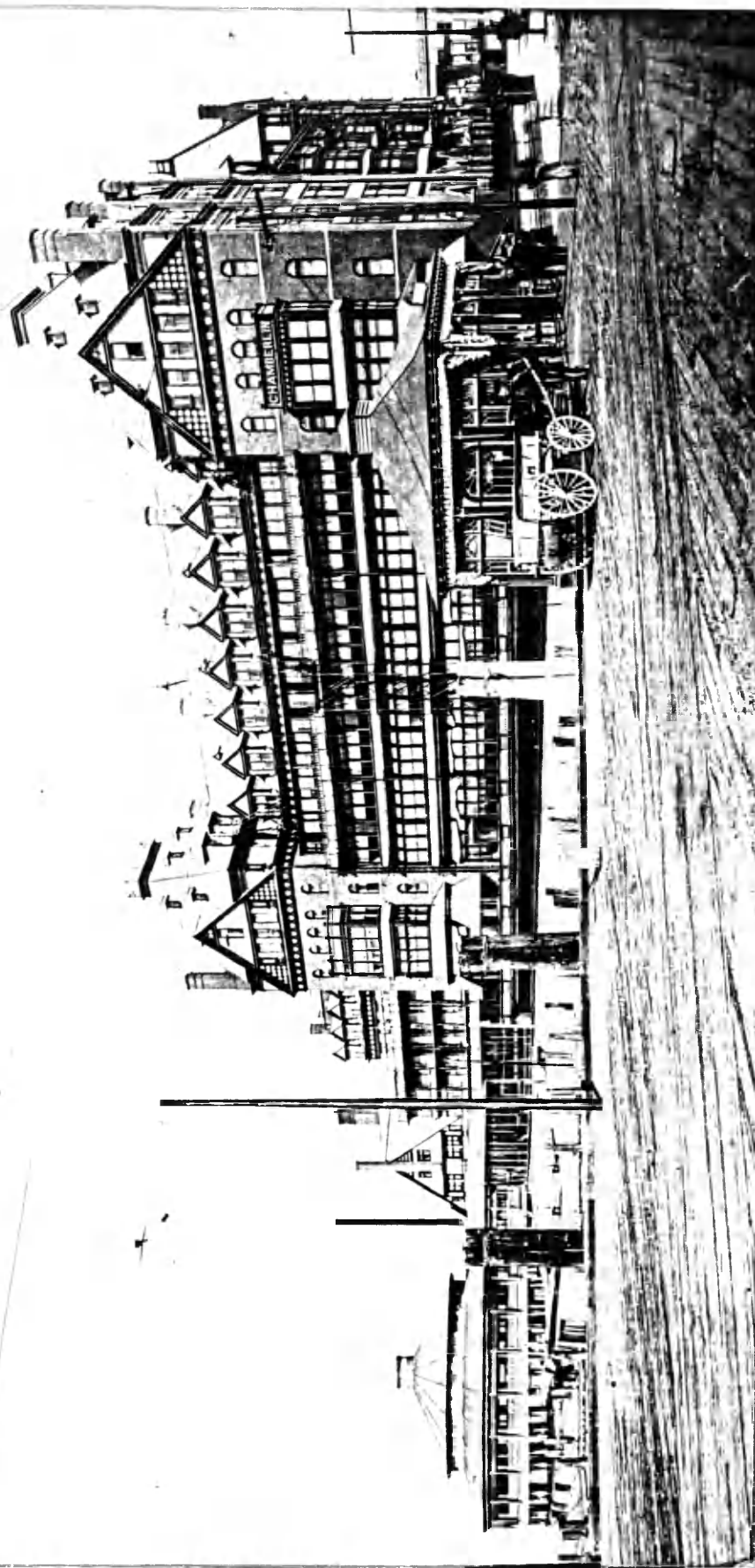


Figure 23. Designed by Smithmeyer and Pelz, the Hotel Chamberlin with its many windows, gabled roof, and verticality was typical of the popular Queen Anne style (Burkhart Collection).

clustered, were also a characteristic of the style, and the Hotel Chamberlin possessed literally a thousand windows, letting in all of the outdoors.

Due to the difficulties in attaining financing, construction of the hotel was delayed. More than three years had elapsed since the resolution granting Chamberlin permission had been passed. When reviewed by the Committee on Military Affairs, it was reported and suggested that due to the great need for an additional hotel, the resolution be amended "so that Mr. Chamberlin may be compelled to act, or the privilege granted him be rescinded, and be made to give way to some one who will supply the object desired" (51-1: House Report 2373).

Eventually Senator George Hearst became interested in the enterprise and formed the Old Point Comfort Hotel Company Inc. The company, comprised of Chamberlin and his friends, was incorporated on November 11, 1889. In 1890, Chamberlin and his wife transferred the rights awarded to them to the Old Point Comfort Hotel Company. Chamberlin received \$25,000 in cash, \$35,000 in 25-year bonds of the new company, and \$440,000 stock in the company (Elizabeth City County Deed Book 20:233). Construction began in 1890 under the firm of C. T. Holtzclaw.

Unable to pay Pelz and Smithmeyer and other creditors, the owners gave stock in the Old Point Comfort Hotel Company in lieu of payment (Burkhart Collection: Library of Congress).

In 1891, Chamberlin and a group of stockholders accompanied him to Old Point Comfort to see the progress of the hotel. Among those were Senator Hearst, J. P. Morgan, George Boldt of the Waldorf-Astoria, J. Breslin, and Collis P. Huntington, some of the most influential men of the time (Casemate Museum Files).

Senator Hearst, president of the company, a chief financial backer and driving force behind the hotel, died in 1891. His financial interest passed to his estate which was to be involved in legal disputes for many years. This loss of such an important fiscal source was compounded by other problems so that by late 1891, the financial difficulties had reached significant proportions.

At the outset, the cost of the hotel was estimated at \$400,000. It was believed the hotel could be financed via a mortgage loan of \$600,000 at five per cent interest. However, costly enlargements and improvements were advised by Smithmeyer and, in some cases, were absolutely necessary - increasing the estimated cost to \$800,000. Further means were necessary to carry the building to completion. So a plan was developed to make a new loan of \$1,000,000 at six per cent interest. In order to secure the first mortgage executed by the Knickerbocker Trust, stockholders were asked to exchange their five per cent first mortgage bonds of the \$600,000 issue for the same amount in six per cent bonds of a new issue of \$1,000,000 (Burkhart Collection: Library of Congress).

Since the Hygeia Hotel had reached an income of \$87,000 in three months time and cleared \$164,000 for the year 1890, it was speculated that the completed Hotel Chamberlin, being of greater elegance and capacity, would be quite profitable. As the structure stood in 1891, insured for \$300,000, "The walls were up, roof on, floors laid, walls plastered, electric wiring done and heating and plumbing well advanced" (Burkhart Collection: Library of Congress).

Harper's Weekly described the hotel in 1891 (October 31) as a rival to the national Capitol in size, being in all three feet longer.

...The great parlor is 200 feet in length, and 104 feet on all sides enclose the ballroom. The dining room measures 102 by 120 feet and is 28 feet in height. The corridor is 400 feet long. The hotel will have 544 rooms for guests, of which 148 will be "en suite," having salt-water baths in addition to the regular fixtures. Gas will be wholly dispensed with, and the Edison system of electric light will be in triplicate to insure perfect and constant service. All the minor details that do so much toward insuring comfort have been attended to and it is wonderful what has been considered and attained in all things. The hotel covers 129,000 square feet and is four stories in height. It has a simplicity of design that might be adopted for other buildings of like character, most of which incline toward the gingerbread style of architecture. Situated in the region of terrapin, canvas back and oyster, the soul of epicure may rejoice, for the reputation of Mr. Chamberlin is national. The statesmen at Washington however, are not to lose him, notwithstanding his new venture, as he will attend to both places.

With the help of bondholders, the hotel was scheduled to open in January of 1892. It was to be open year-round and

have two seasons of four months each "in which capacity will be insufficient for the demand, it cannot fail to yield ample returns upon the investment" (Burkhart Collection: Library of Congress).

Yet even with the new financing system, it was not enough. The entire cost when completed was now estimated to be \$750,000 and only \$450,000 in bonds had been sold. As of June 15, 1892, an additional \$175,000 was needed immediately. Letters were sent by John Chamberlin to stockholders asking for the additional backing. The amenities of the hotel were specified: "544 rooms...148 will be in suites with bath to each, with hot and cold and fresh and salt water...kept on the American Plan...a separate restaurant and kitchen...billiard rooms, bar, cafe, bowling-alley, drug-store, news and cigar stands, broker's office, railroad and telegraph offices; and in the basement which is 8 and one half feet high...all kinds of baths....The plumbing and sewerage will be perfect...no taxes, license, or rent to pay." The carpets were by W. & J. Sloan and the silverware by the Gorham Manufacturing Company both of New York. The furniture was to be from the Nelson Matter Furniture Company of Michigan (Burkhart Collection: Library of Congress).

Chamberlin schemed diligently to raise the necessary funds, but was unsuccessful. Unable to market its securities, the company went bankrupt and construction was halted. The company and its assets were put into receivership by Judge



Bond of the U.S. Circuit Court in Virginia on August 12, 1892. The named receiver was Mr. B. F. Dos Passos, coincidentally a relative of one of the company's stockholders. While plans were being made to recover the property, on March 4, 1893, shortly after Grover Cleveland was inaugurated for his second term, financial panic struck the nation. The hotel was sold at public sale for \$260,000 to the Hampton Roads Hotel Company on June 19, 1893 (Elizabeth City County Deed Book 24:117). The builders received a pro-rated share of the bankruptcy sale.

As a result of the failed effort to build the Hotel Chamberlin, the Hygeia Hotel remained the only hotel at Old Point Comfort and continued its unchallenged dominance. Despite its 1000 guest capacity, the Hygeia Hotel was taxed to its fullest in 1893 when the fleet assembled in Hampton Roads for a naval review. It was recalled by Mrs. Rosalie Caswell Hood in 1940:

Soon there after the World's Fair of 1893 brought the ships of all nations to Hampton Roads....We were at Old Point and I was again at the Hygeia, which was crowded beyond capacity by visitors from all the states and indeed from all the countries. Such a round of dinners, parties, suppers, receptions and other functions! One of the most impressive was a grand reception on the flagship of the United States Navy. I recall the brilliant and inspiring scene the night the ships formed in line and slowly steamed out of Hampton Roads toward the ocean. We watched them for hours, such a pageant, until they were lost in the mist and the darkness (Burkhart Collection).

However, the monopoly held by the Hygeia Hotel did not

last much longer. The Hampton Roads Hotel Company completed the construction of the Hotel Chamberlin in 1896. The hotel, having been under construction for nine years, was opened on April 4. There was had a notable opening with the appropriate ceremonies. After a day of speeches and tours of the hotel, an elegant ball followed an elaborate banquet. Half of Congress and numerous officers of the military were there for the festivities. John Chamberlin was also in attendance to see his long awaited namesake completed (The Daily Pilot April 4, 1896). The C&O railway ran a round-trip special from Richmond to Old Point Comfort for \$1.50 to accommodate the public at large (The Times April 6, 1896).

Soon afterwards John Chamberlin died at the Grand Union Hotel in Saratoga of Bright's disease and complications (The New York Times August 9, 1896). Upon his death on August 23, 1896, his estate claims were \$115,000, leaving \$85 for his wife and children (The Daily Press April 30 ,1972). According to The New York Times (August 24, 1896), he was respected by more public men than any other person who contributed to the creature comforts of notables the likes of racing men, sporting men, and politicians.

The main entrance of the Hotel Chamberlin was on Ingalls Road (Figures 24 and 25). While a railroad serviced the area, most guests arrived by steamboat to the Baltimore Wharf for by this time Old Point Comfort was a regular destination for numerous steamship and railway lines. Among the steam lines

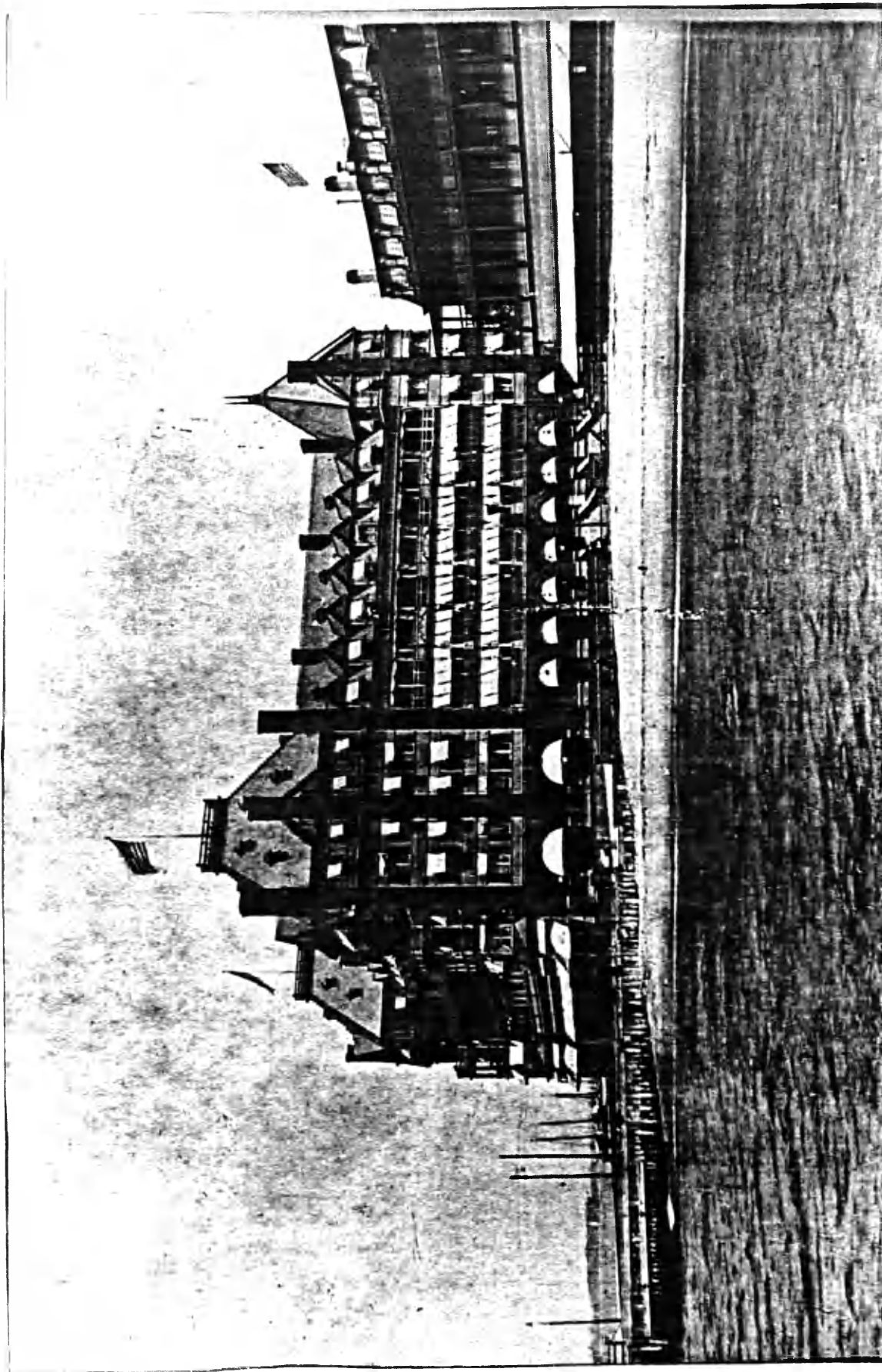


Figure 24. Though the Hotel Chamberlin had extensive waterfront coverage, the main entrance faced Ingalls Road and the Hygeia Hotel located to the right in this photograph (Burkhart Collection).



Figure 25. From 1896 until 1902, this scene of the Hotel Chamberlin and the Hygeia Hotel greeted passengers disembarking from the many steamboats which serviced Old Point Comfort (Burkhart Collection).

offering service to Old Point Comfort were the Old Bay Line and the Chesapeake Line from Baltimore, the Norfolk and Washington Line from Washington, and the Old Dominion Line from New York.

The entrance and lobby of the hotel were of sizeable proportions (Figure 27). Several of the public rooms had names recalling Washington, such as Rotunda and the Congressional Drawing Room (Figure 26). These names reflected the established link with the nation's capital and were not used purely in a nationalistic sense as were some other contemporary hotels (Grand Union, Congress Hall, etc., of Saratoga).

The dining room, reached by a great corridor from the lobby, was roughly in the shape of a Greek cross. An ornamental gallery or elevated promenade along the sides of the dining room afforded a fascinating view from above the main floor (Figure 28). At one end was a balcony where a large orchestra played during the dinner hour. Two sides of the room, comprised of broad windows, offered an unobstructed view of the water from every table (Burkhart Collection: Miss Annie Transcript).

The Hotel Chamberlin was conducted under the American Plan. "This means you know just what your expenses will be that you are saved all the annoyance of thinking about what to order and that you get the best cuisine and correct service at moderate prices" (Why? nd:5). The food served was "just

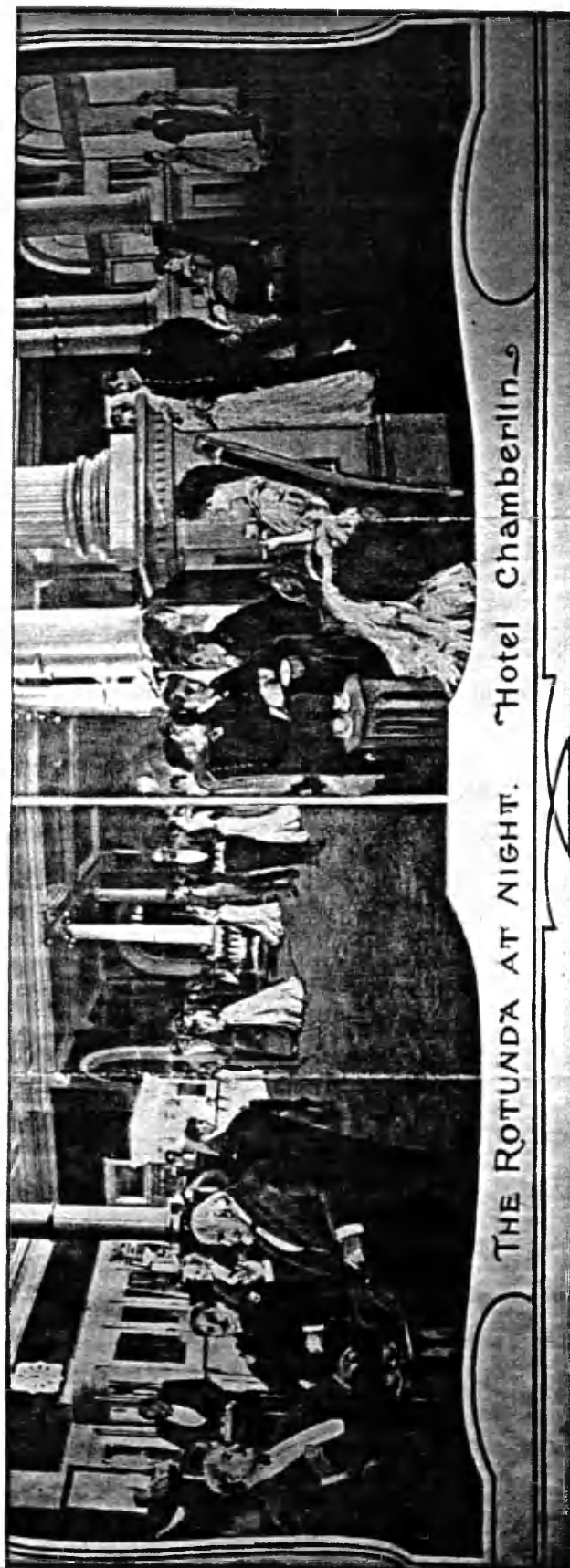


Figure 26. The lobby of the Hotel Chamberlin, The Rotunda, was the "hearthstone of the hotel." Guests socialized there each evening following dinner (Burkhardt Collection).

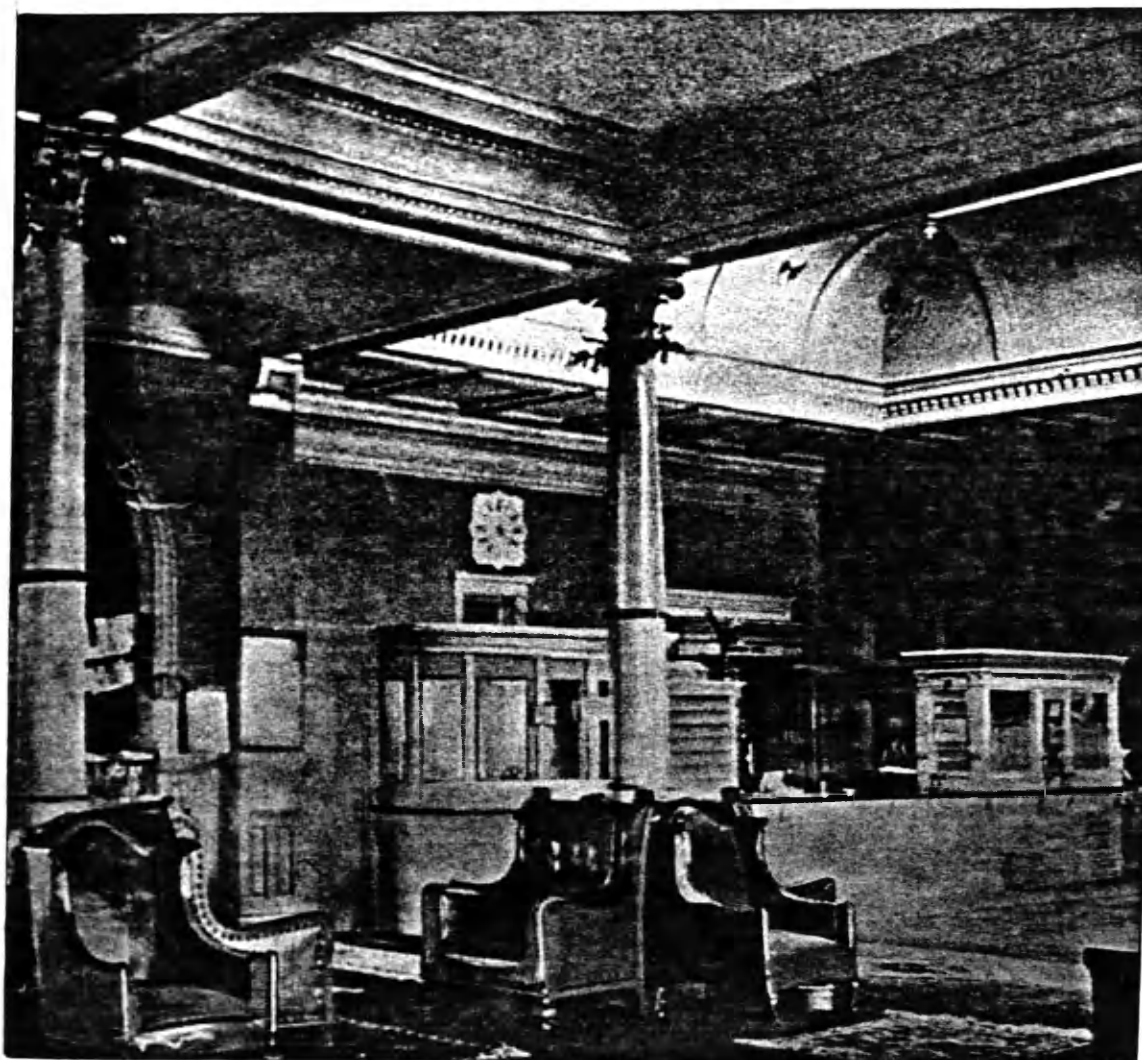


Figure 27. The Office was located within The Rotunda and linked guests via telegraph and telephone service with the outside world. Note the Corinthian columns and vaulted ceilings (Burkhart Collection).



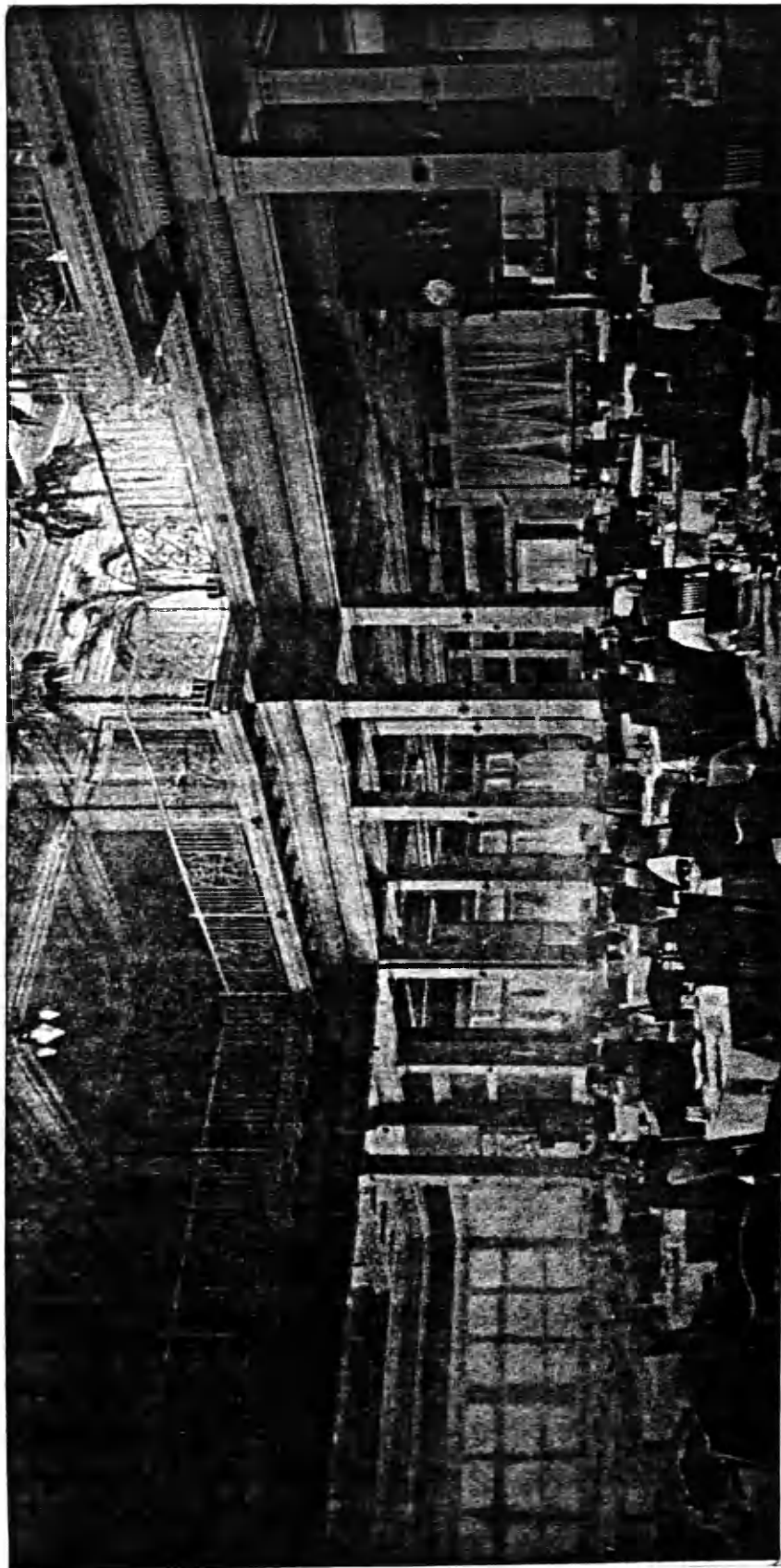


Figure 28. Guests of the Hotel Chamberlin were treated to the delights of Chesapeake and Tidewater cuisine while an orchestra played from the balcony (Burkhardt Collection).



like you would get at home; food that tastes good - old Virginia cornbread and Smithfield ham, oysters right out of the water; good, wholesome, American food, like mother used to cook" (Why? nd:5). People delighted in dining on "the products of the sea" for which Tidewater was famous.

Adjoining the dining room on the right was the elaborately finished ballroom with more than 1000 square feet of dancing space on a spring floor (Figure 29). It was brilliantly lit and special attention in construction was given to ventilation. Dances were held twice weekly in the ballroom and were frequented by the young officers of the fort. Military and naval balls were also given at the Hotel Chamberlin. As an accessory to the ballroom, the Hotel Chamberlin also boasted its "padded room," a small room with a circular table and padded walls which provided a sound proofing effect for the private conversations of courting.

The Palm Garden ran along the water on the south side of the house. Tea was served each afternoon there, affording a time to chat and gossip (Figure 30). Music was provided by the orchestra. A similar event was held with after-dinner coffee served in the lobby, a time for cigar smoking for the gentlemen and more conversation for the ladies.

Opposite the Palm Garden, constructed at the end of a pier, was the Pavilion, made of iron and glass. It offered dancing space and, being built over the water, provided a refreshing breeze. The Pavilion functioned as a summer gar-

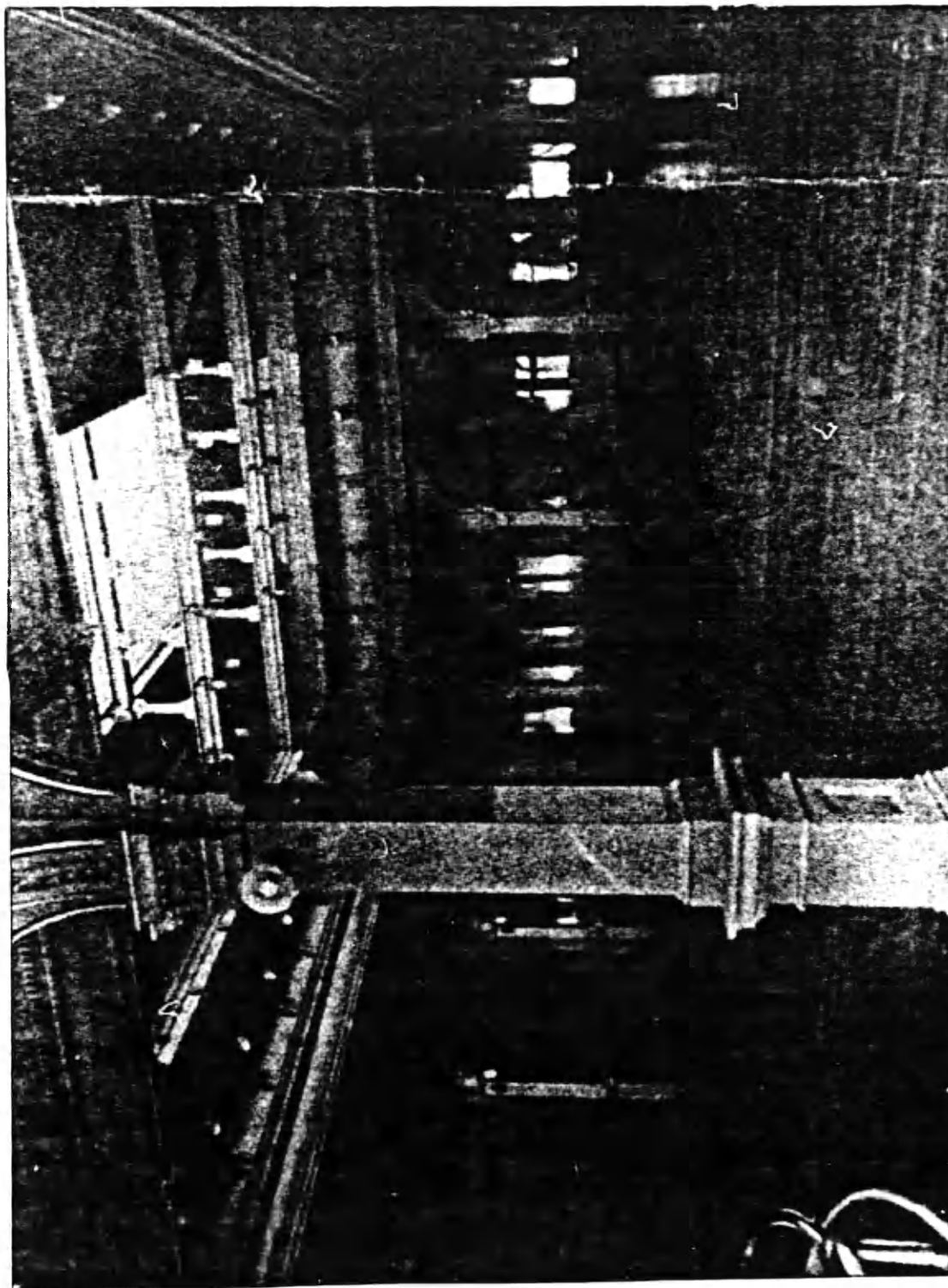


Figure 29. The ballroom of the Hotel Chamberlin was the site of many military balls. Its dance floor covered more than 1000 square feet (Burkhart Collection).



Figure 30. The veranda, trademark of a resort, took the form of an enclosed Palm Garden at the Hotel Chamberlin. Guests gazed upon the vistas of Hampton Roads while socializing (Burkhart Collection).

den, hall, and pier; and many went there for coolness. But as it interfered with small barges used by the government, it was ordered torn down (The Norfolk and Virginian Pilot October 17, 1902). Despite this order, the Pavilion seems not to have been destroyed, since it was still visible in advertisements in later years.

The Hotel Chamberlin featured the broad piazzas of the glassed-in sun parlor that overlooked Hampton Roads and gave one the impression of being on an ocean voyage without the inconvenience. "You have the sensation of being at sea. The broad piazzas are parallel with the shore not ten yards away..." (Adams nd). There were also card tables, bowling lanes, and billiards contained within the building (Figures 31 and 32).

From three sides of the hotel the water was visible. With the fourth side facing the fort, all rooms were afforded a "good outlook." A visitor in 1900 remarked, "While we did not occupy the 'President's Room,' our suite opened upon one of the delightful sun verandahs, and very much to our liking were the salt-water baths. It is a pleasure to lie down at night in a bed-chamber like those of the Chamberlin, with no sense of stuffiness pressing upon one's windpipe" (The Resorter January 1900:15).

The first manager of the Hotel Chamberlin was Mr. Alan Campbell. Under his direction, new bathing houses were added in 1900 and were a great success. Plans were made for the

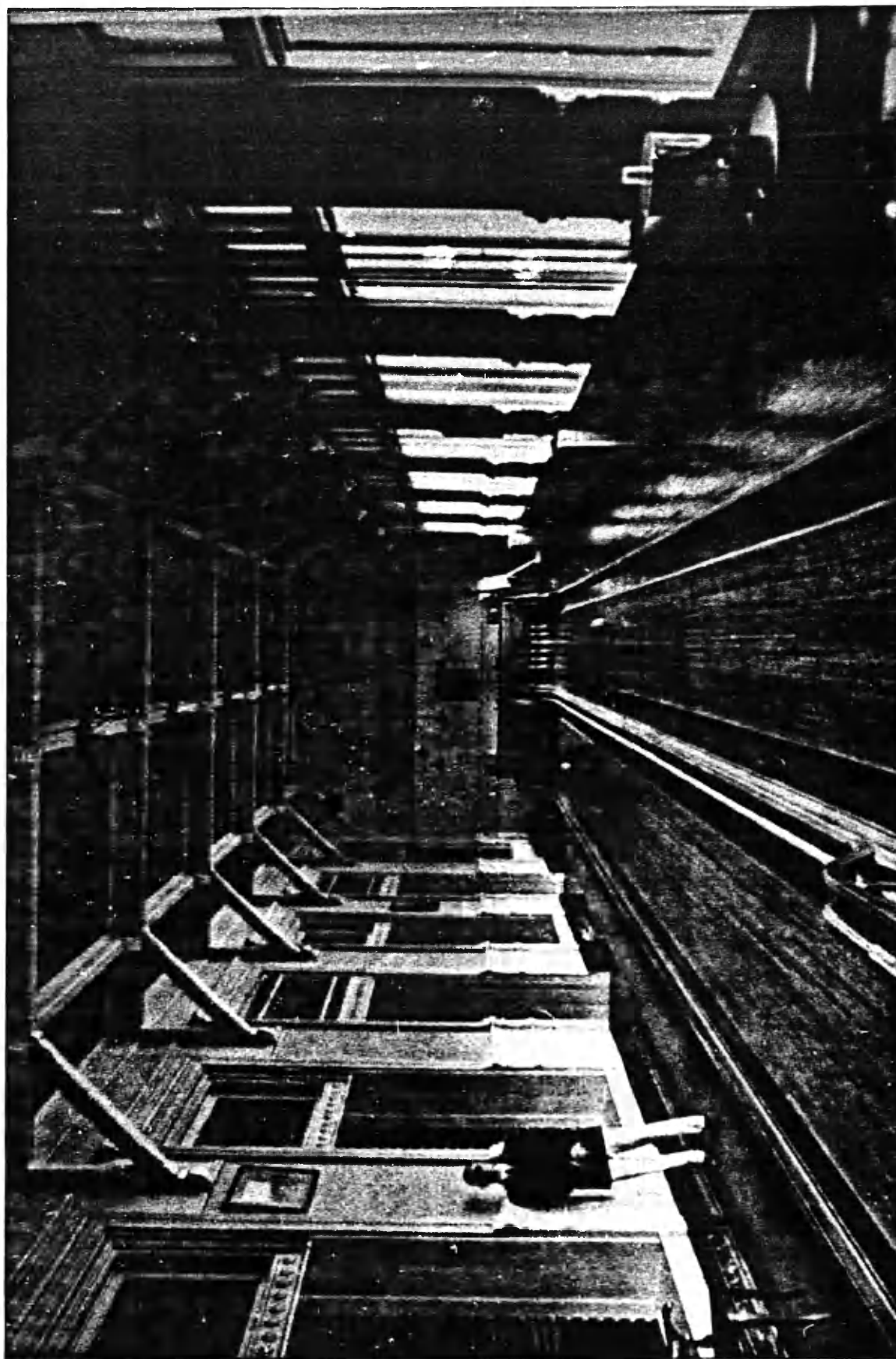


Figure 31. The lanes pictured above were located within the Hotel Chamberlin. Bowling had long been a resort feature (Burkhart Collection).

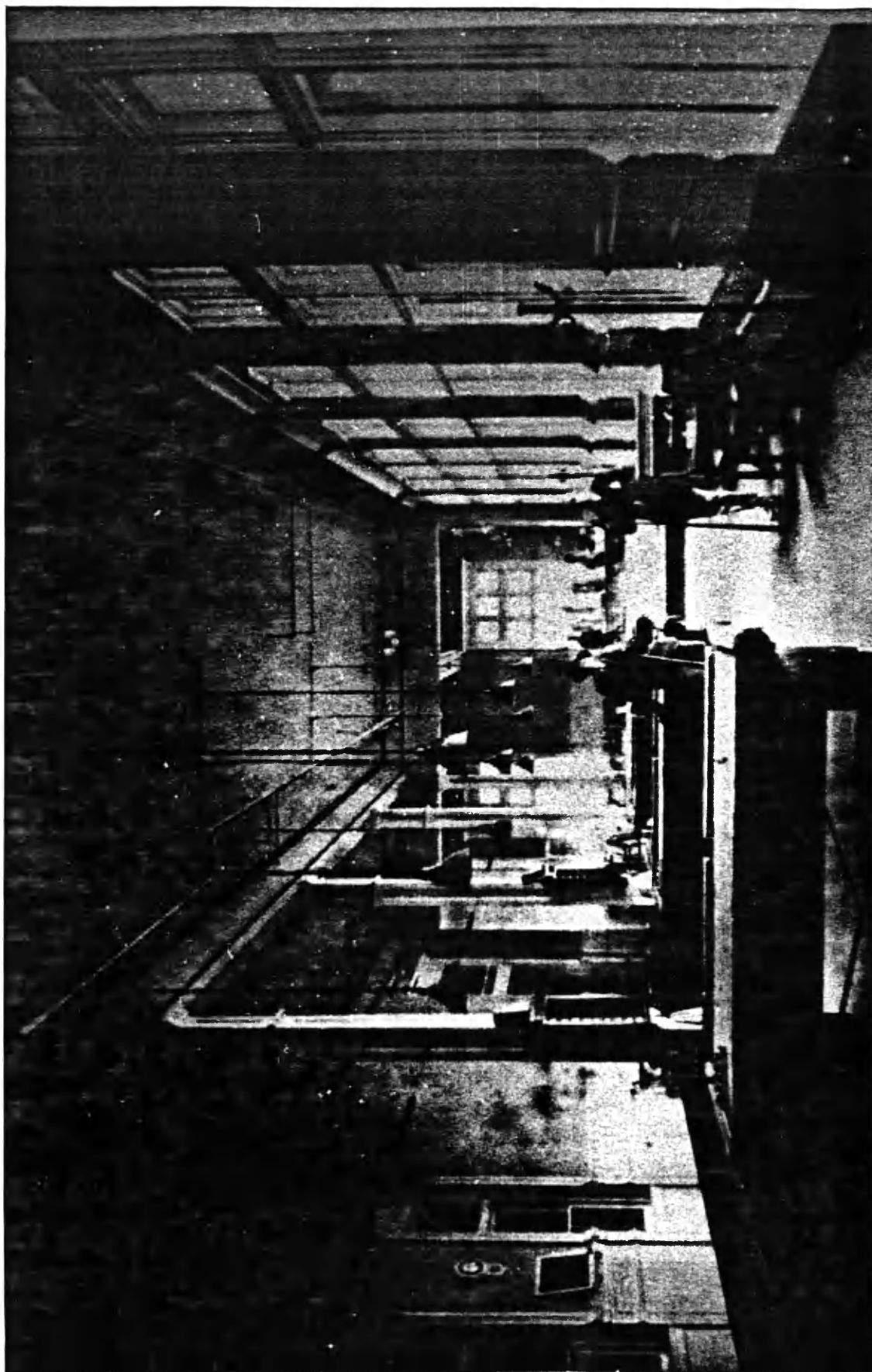


Figure 32. Only males participated in this game of chance in the Billiard Room of the Hotel Chamberlin (Burkhardt Collection).

palm rooms to be converted into a summer dining room "from which magnificent views of the ocean will be obtained." Throughout the summer of 1900 "an excellent vaudeville company gives performances nightly in the cool and commodious pavilion. W.T. Carleton is a member of the company." Evening excursions from Norfolk and Portsmouth brought crowds of visitors (The Resorter July 1900:12).

The locality sustained a shock as a health resort during the Spanish American War in consequence of the yellow fever which appeared at about the same time at the Soldiers' Home. Business at both the Hygeia Hotel and Hotel Chamberlin dropped considerably.

During the war with Spain, it was reported that the situation would require the removal of the Hygeia Hotel. No such necessity arose, however, and the owners were led to believe that the hotel would be left alone. Assuming this to be true, the Hygeia Hotel property was sold to the Old Point Comfort Improvement Company on April 17, 1901 for the sum of \$100,000 - a low price being a result of the yellow fever problem.

The Hampton Roads Hotel Company had struggled financially from its acquisition of the Hotel Chamberlin despite the relative success of the hotel. In 1901, the Hotel Chamberlin, by judicial decree, was sold for \$300,000 to the Old Point Comfort Improvement Company (Elizabeth City County Deed Book 36:130).

With the change of ownership, Alan Campbell retired and was succeeded as manager by Colonel George A. Keeler of the Hotel Essex in Boston. That same year, the management of the Hygeia Hotel passed for a brief period from F. N. Pike to his chief of staff, Lamar Hollyday. However, shortly thereafter, Colonel Keeler became the manager of both the Hygeia Hotel and the Hotel Chamberlin, as they operated side by side as friendly neighbors (Figure 33).

The Old Point Comfort Improvement Company made \$20,958.39 in extensive improvements to the Hygeia Hotel only to find within a few months that the hotel was to be torn down. In a letter from Secretary of War, Elihu Root, June 7, 1902, this call for removal was said to be necessary to provide room for the proper enlargement of the post of Fort Monroe. It was later found that the removal of the Hygeia Hotel was in order that a park (Figure 34), the present Continental park, might be created on the site where it stood (57-1: Senate Report 2836).

The Hygeia Hotel closed on September 1, 1902 and demolition began on September 29, by the Burrill Company (Virginian-Pilot September 7, 1902:5). The Old Point Comfort Improvement Company filed charges against the government for compensation for the demolition and removal of the Hygeia Hotel. It was recommended by the Secretary of War that, given the circumstances, they should be compensated. However, since the company was also the owner of the Hotel Chamberlin, it was



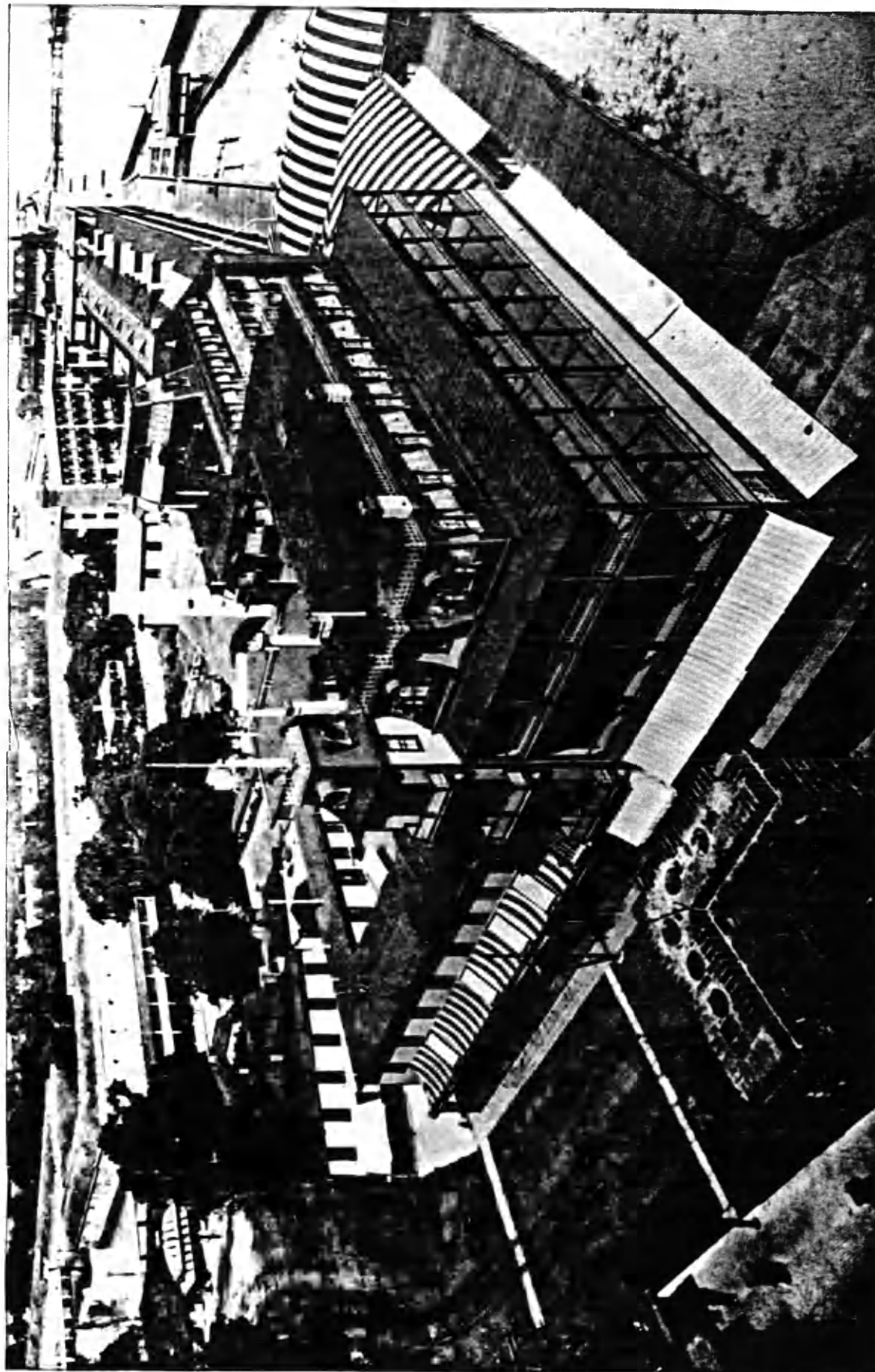


Figure 33. This picture taken from a tower of the Hotel Chamberlin shows the rambling sprawl of the Hygeia Hotel (Burkhart Collection).

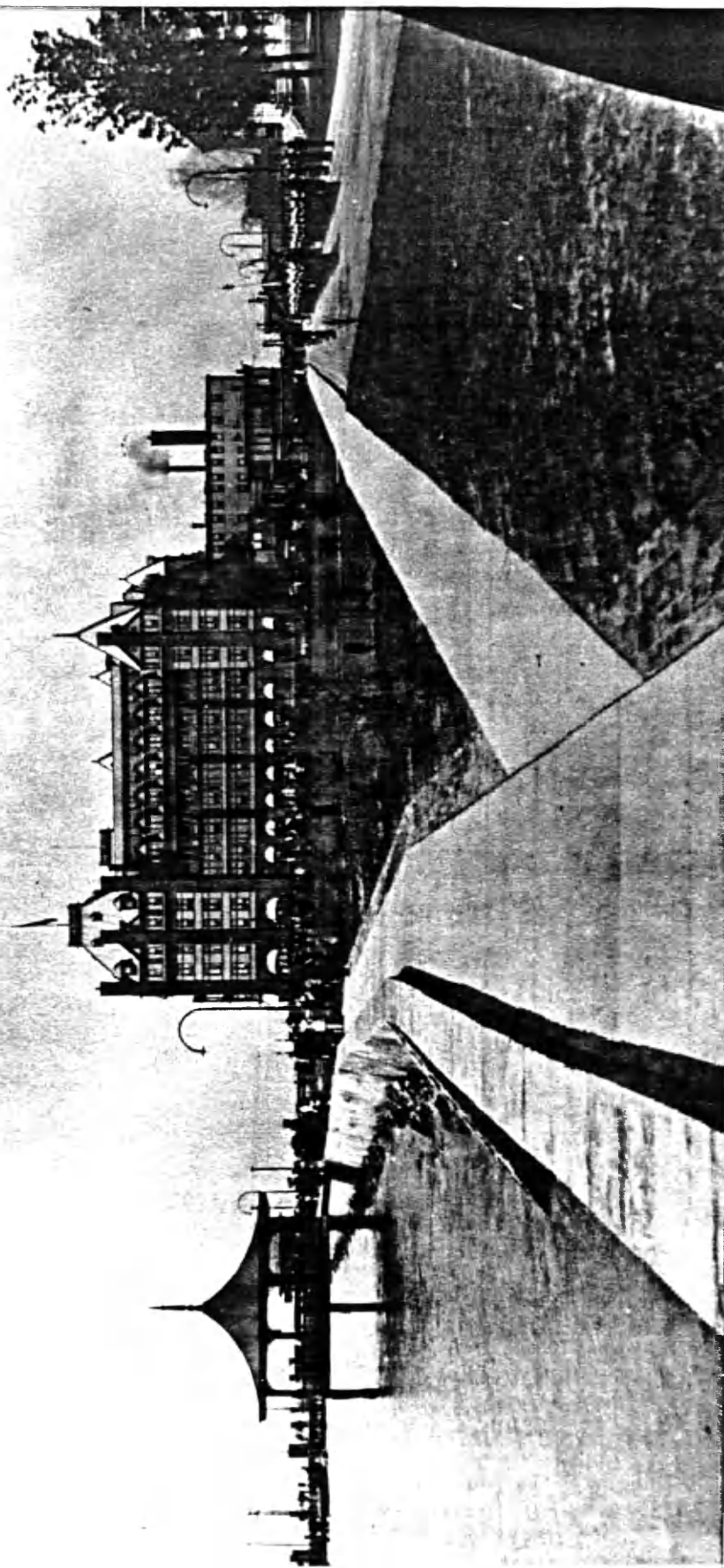


Figure 34. This photograph was taken from the park formed after the 1902 razing of the Hygeia Hotel. The structure in the left foreground was the Hygeia bathing pavilion (Burkhart Collection).

decided that as they would benefit from the removal of the Hygeia Hotel by the higher patronage which would accrue at the Hotel Chamberlin, and as there was not enough business to support two hotels, the award was not made (58-2: House Report 2236).

It was under the management of George Adams, who came to the hotel in 1902 and remained for 18 years, that the Hotel Chamberlin reached its greatest glory. He had learned the hotel business in Baltimore and honed his skills in establishments in major cities across the country. Prior to his appointment to the Hotel Chamberlin, he had been at the Hotel Warwick in Newport News. Adams had something of the same personality as Harrison Phoebus, believing in having the best hotel possible and the vigorous promotion thereof. His success at the Hotel Chamberlin later led to his becoming the manager of the White Sulphur Springs Hotel in Greenbrier, West Virginia as well (Adams 1909).

Old Point Comfort had been a primary resort for the southern aristocracy, and their grandchildren and great-grandchildren continued the tradition. The busiest time of the year was during winter and early spring, with special rates for summer (The Resorter June 1899:13). Many people stopped on their way to Florida. There was a large element who made the Hotel Chamberlin their "winter home." The hotel was a station for the New York Yacht Club and the winter home of the North Atlantic Fighting Squadron. Many retired Army

and Navy officers lived at the hotel, finding every facility for being in touch with "both arms of the service."

The halls of the hotel were graced by the presence of many young officers who took their meals there and lingered on for the companionship offered by the female visitors. There was a full dress retreat held each afternoon, that was followed by free tea and cookies at the hotel (Figure 35). Lieutenants could receive their meals for \$42.50 per month (Weinert and Arthur 1978:169).

Adams was sure to remind calculating mothers with eligible daughters that the fort was the largest Army post in the country and that the Hotel Chamberlin was the focus of social life there. His advertisements, which appeared in some of the best magazines of the times, often showed "proud beauties squired by virile army and naval officers projected against the romantic backgrounds of Fort Monroe's parade ground or the sail-studded waters of Hampton Roads" giving a more literal meaning to "both arms of the service" (Casemate Museum Papers: No. 10).

A novelette, The Colonel's Capitulation, was written by Julien Stuart and Frank Finney about the romantic aspect of life at the resort. The book is a story in which Ethel Burwell, a guest at the Hotel Chamberlin, is pursued by Lieutenant Jack Mallon. She stubbornly refuses to marry but - aided by the moon on the waters of Hampton Roads - love prevails.

Fort Monroe Garrison  
on Parade,  
Fort Monroe, Va.

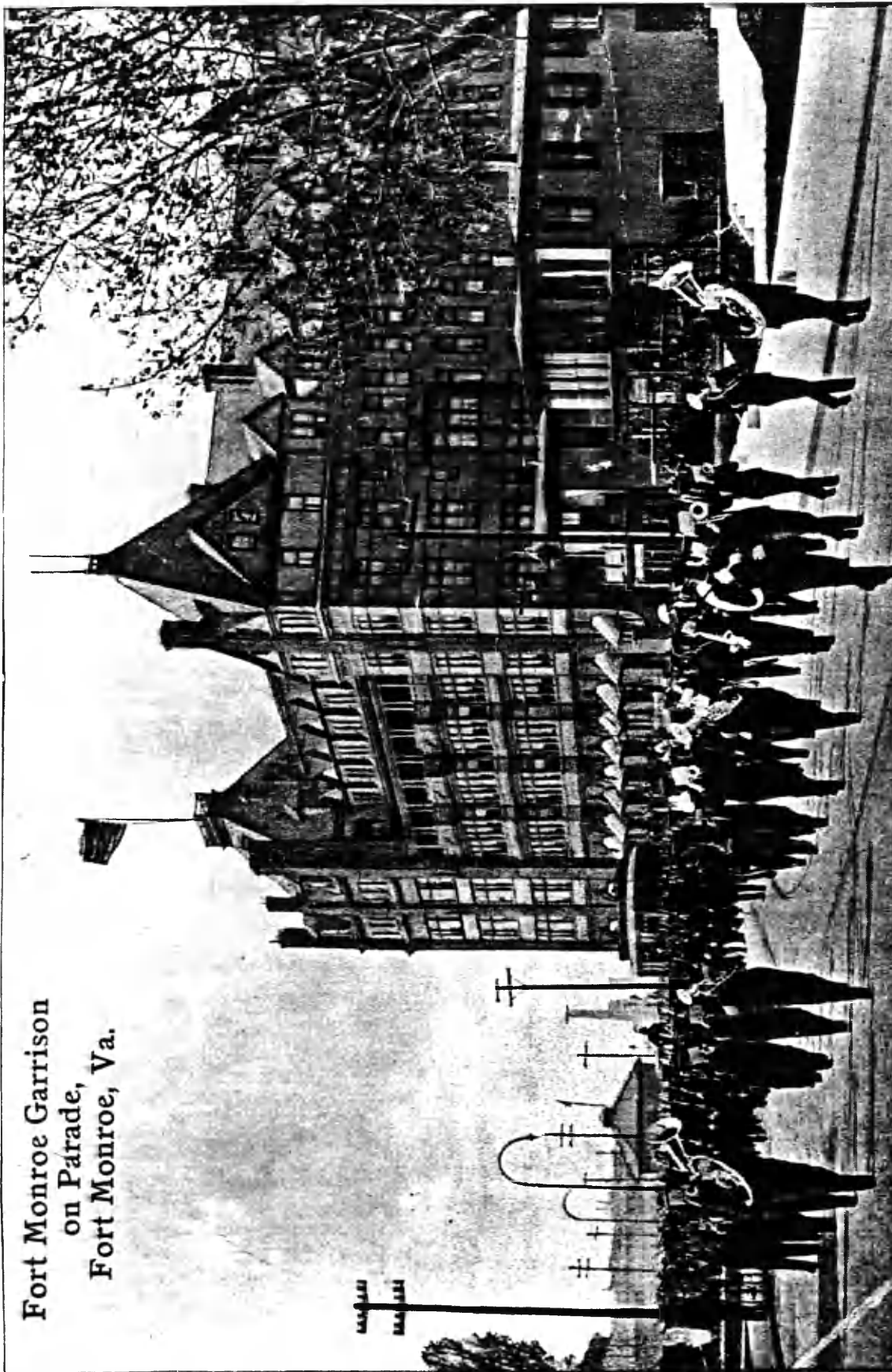


Figure 35. The Fort Monroe Garrison paraded along Ingalls Road. This ritual was enacted each day (burkhart Collection).

The Hotel Chamberlin was a great honeymoon resort. Niagara Falls may have been the honeymoon mecca for the national masses, but the Hotel Chamberlin was the mecca for newlyweds of the regional society element. The hotel also functioned as a social center for the local people. Going to the Hotel Chamberlin was "as much a part of the social program of the younger society as any other element" (The Virginian-Pilot and Norfolk Landmark April 7, 1928).

While most attention was given to those activities to be found within the Hotel Chamberlin, there were also activities listed for those wishing outside amusement: sailing, hunting, and playing tennis. An 18 hole golf course had been established near the hotel by Adams for the sport, which was gaining in popularity. "The Chamberlin Links" were a mere six minutes ride away by trolley (Colonial Echo 1918). These were, of course, the stereotypic amusements offered at any resort. Unique to the Hotel Chamberlin were the offerings of Fort Monroe, the beauty of the area, the Soldiers' Home, and the nearby historic sights. These sights were accessible by touring cars. The Chamberlin Sight Seeing Auto visited Hampton, Fort Monroe, and the Soldiers' Home, leaving the hotel each day at 10 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., at the cost of \$1.00. The Chamberlin Touring Yacht "Osprey" departed daily at 9:30 and 2:30 for a three-hour cruise of Hampton Roads at the same cost (Scribner's Magazine February 1907:82). Additionally, a trolley provided service for people traveling to and from

Newport News.

As its predecessors had done, the Hotel Chamberlin greatly emphasized and promoted the climate of the area and its healthful aspects. "Relatively dry atmosphere, sunshine weather, freedom from severe winters and immunity from epidemic and contagious diseases...no malaria and no hay fever" (Chamberlin Museum Display).

The Hygeia Hotel (1863-1902) and the earlier Hygeia Hotel (1821-1862) had offered baths and bathing facilities, as they became popular for recreational activity. However, by the time of the Hotel Chamberlin, the activities which were expected by the public at a resort were well-defined. The Hotel Chamberlin, by design included an arrangement which was to specifically cater to "valetudarians," the wealthy class of people overly concerned with their poor health.

The hotel stressed that it was not a sanitarium and did not take people with pulmonary troubles but did accept those who wanted to build up, rest, and sleep (Why?:8). "This is not a sanitarium but a Hotel filled with charming and interesting people...for people with complaints that are not disagreeable to others....Certain illnesses will be specifically susceptible to our treatment....We specialize in Neurasthenia." This term was used to describe the ailment of those who could not "go the pace" due to the strenuous routines of life, such as those experienced by "the average business man and society woman" (The Way To Get Well).

All guests of the hotel were encouraged to take advantage of the perceived benefits of the chemical and physical properties of sea-water (Why?:7). The Pompeian swimming pool measured 40 by 70 feet and was filled with heated sea-water. It was lined with ceramic mosaic tile and purified by filtration. It was radiant with sunlight from an enormous skylight above. The Atrium ran the length of one side of the pool, just high enough above the water to give onlookers a sense of participation. The room contained palms and was decorated in tones of vert antique and white. Light filtered through stained glass windows. The sea pool was recommended for all guests; however, for those not able to enter the sea pool, the hotel offered hot sea bath tubs (The Way to Get Well).

The Hydrotherapeutic Department was reported complete in every detail, "...all sorts of medicinal baths are here given under the most favorable of conditions: Nauheim Baths, continuous or massage baths, cabinet baths....We especially recommend those baths in which the pure sea-water is used" (Why?:7). It was proposed that many if not most problems encountered by the human form could be aided significantly with such baths.

Gout, Rheumatism and similar disorders have their origins in the presence of Uric Acid in the blood and are always benefitted by our Radium Baths and the drinking of Radio-active waters.

Auto Toxication. Many disorders are the resultant of failure to eliminate poisonous accumulations from the system; our baths, Treatments and Sweating Processes with massage,



together with High Frequency methods are successful in enabling you to throw off these poisons (The Way to Get Well).

The baths were taken only under the direction of a physician, who in cooperation with one's own physician, would direct one to the Hydrotherapy Department (Why?:8). The gender-segregated bathing rooms were located above the pool and Atrium, and a special chair, something like a rickshaw, was used to transport the guests.

The principal feature of the often prescribed "Chamberlin System" was the Spout or Douche in which sea-water, varying in pressure and temperature, was more or less shot at the body (Figure 36). It was said to stimulate and toughen the skin and quicken circulation to remove toxic substances. When the need arose, a cabinet bath employing either electric light, steam, or hot air was used, followed by the spout. Sometimes it was deemed wise to follow this treatment with a massage of sea-salt. People could choose to take their medication ionically (Figure 37), a way in which it was believed medication would travel via galvanic current through the unbroken skin to the ailing body part (The Way to Get Well).

The Aix system and Vichy system were named for the area of Europe where they were supposedly originated. In the Aix System (Figure 38), a stream of water was sprayed on an afflicted body part. The Vichy Treatment sprayed water over the entire body as a patient lay full length on a canvas bed (Figure 39). After each, the patient was dried and wrapped

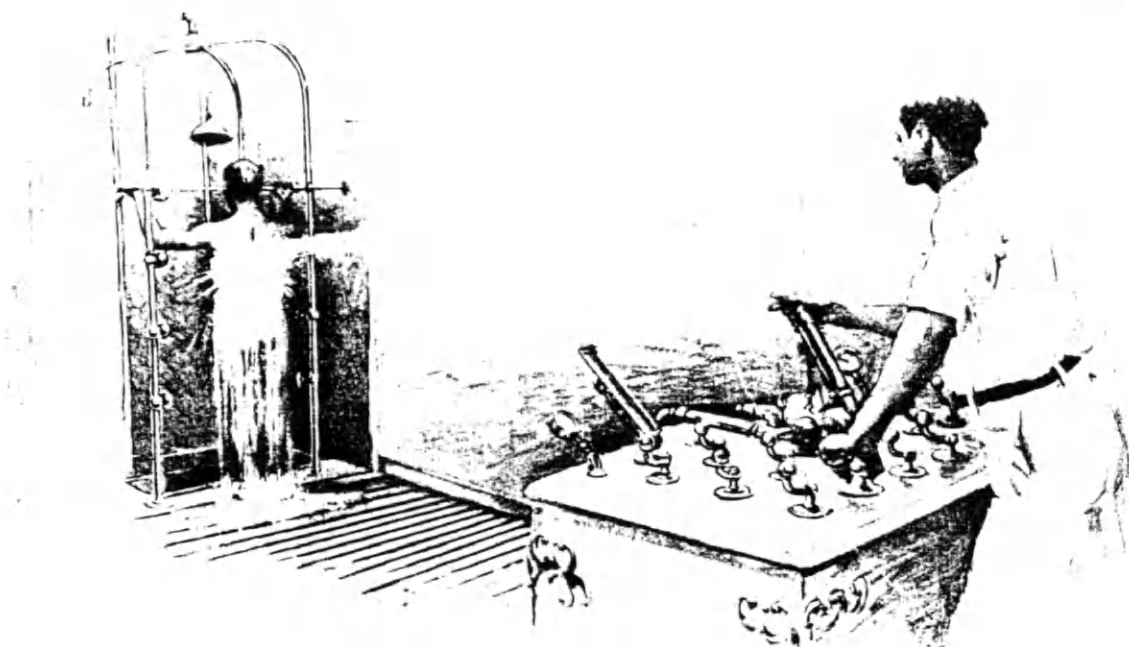


Figure 36. Part of the health treatment offered by the Hotel Chamberlin included the Spout or Douche. Filtered sea-water, directly from the bay, was sprayed at varying temperatures and pressures at the body (The Way to Get Well n.d.).



Figure 37. A procedure called Ionic Medication was available at the Hotel Chamberlin. It involved the conveying of a medicant through the unbroken skin to the afflicted body part via galvanic current (The Way to Get Well n.d.).

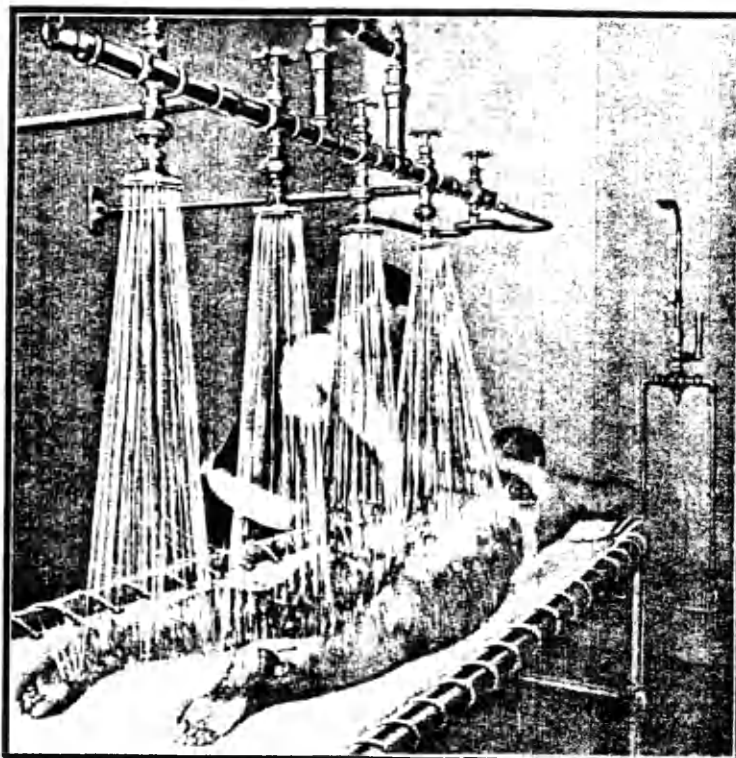


Figure 38. For guests of the Hotel Chamberlin undergoing the Vichy Treatment, water sprayed on the body was accompanied by vigorous massage and was said to be especially beneficial for rheumatism (The Way to Get Well n.d.).

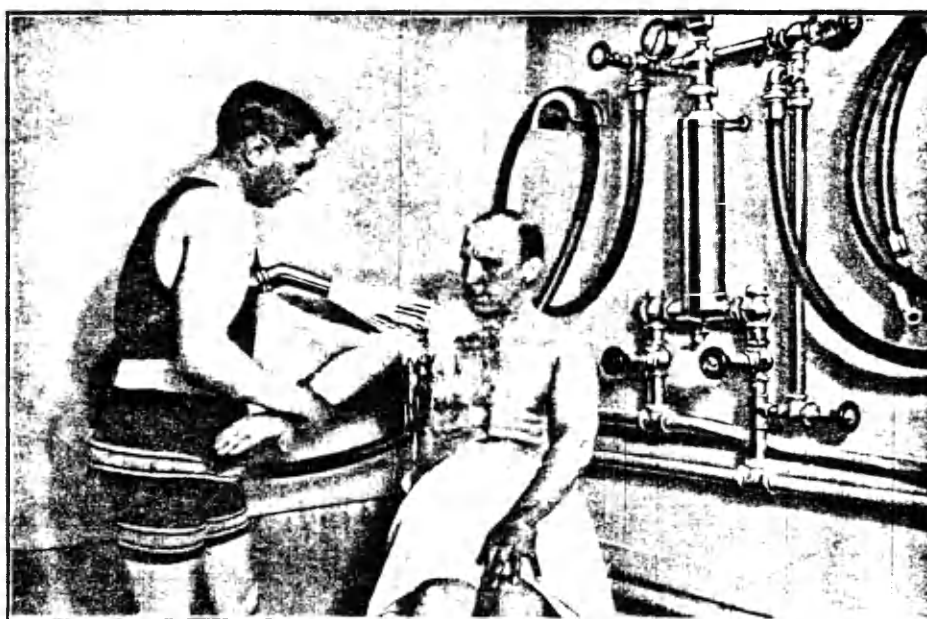


Figure 39. Gout and kindred disorders which affected the joints were said to be "invariably benefitted by the Aix System" (The Way to Get Well n.d.).

in flannel. The Hotel Chamberlin was especially proud to note that all sea-water used for medicinal treatments was "radio-activated" (The Way to Get Well).

In addition to having an abundant supply of sea-water at hand, the Hotel Chamberlin boasted its own supply of spring water. Found at a depth of 900 feet, the water was very salty and originally not thought drinkable. When exposed to the air, the water turned a muddy color. George Adams, on a trip to Europe, saw a similar occurrence in a mineral spring and upon his return, the Hotel Chamberlin promoted this water as absolutely pure and comparable to the waters of Europe. It was stated that a chemical analysis had found the water to possess marked radio-activity. The medicinal use of "The Chamberlin Alkaline Saline Water" was encouraged. The Palm Garden contained the Drinking Fountain where the waters were dispensed usually early in the morning, often as part of "the Cure." To take "the Cure" at the Hotel Chamberlin meant a four-fold combination of drinking the medicinal waters, the taking of certain baths, a regular system of outdoor exercise, and a careful regulation of diet. "Oysters were to be inspected as to be free from contamination" (The Way to Get Well).

The hotel offered other "health" related services as well. The Physico-Medical Department used the famous Ling System of Swedish Gymnastics and massage given by expert

for the removal of face and body blemishes and superfluous hair. Patients could sit under various shades of light known as Finsen Rays to cure many complaints involving stiffness. There was also a complete department for Chiropody and Manicuring (The Way to Get Well).

On April 26, 1907, President Theodore Roosevelt opened the Jamestown Exposition, a national fair to commemorate the founding of the first permanent English speaking settlement at Jamestown in 1607. Until its closing on November 30, the celebration drew nearly three million people to see the various state and government displays. The Exposition was located directly across the water south from Old Point Comfort, providing much business for the Hotel Chamberlin and its recently revamped medicinal baths (Scribner's Magazine February 1907:82). A fleet of men-of-war of many nations was anchored off Old Point Comfort. Small excursion boats ran every 20 minutes between the government pier at the exposition and the hotel (Reynolds 1909). The Hotel Chamberlin was the headquarters for Foreign Officials and Commissioners during the event (Scribner's Magazine February 1907:82).

In 1909, the hotel's rates were listed as:

Single Room	1p	5/day	\$30/week and up
Double Room	2p	10/day	\$60/week and up
Single/Bath	1p	6/and up	\$40/week and up
Double/Bath	2p	12/and up	\$75/week and up

(Adams 1909).

After the outbreak of World War I, in 1914, Adams cheerfully assured the public that there was no need to be

concerned over the loss of celebrated European resorts, as their services were duplicated to the smallest detail at the Hotel Chamberlin (Casemate Museum Papers No.10). Two weeks spent at Old Point Comfort, coincidentally just the time of a journey to Europe and back, would allow one to experience all the necessary changes of conditions and a course of treatments which might mean improved "health and consequent happiness for the rest of your life" (The Way to Get Well).

Throughout its years of operation, the Hotel Chamberlin was threatened by numerous fires, but each was controlled. On March 7, 1920, the Fort Monroe fire department was called at 5:15 p.m. (Fort Monroe Fire Department: Daily Log). Help was also summoned from the fire stations at Hampton, Newport News, Phoebus, the Soldiers' Home, Langley Field, and Camp Eustis. When the Fort Monroe department arrived, the rear end of the hotel was ablaze from top to bottom and smoke was rolling out the front windows.

It was believed that the fire started at 4:40 p.m. The structure was of wood except for the lower floor and, aided by a brisk northwest wind, the flames spread quickly. Two hours later the hotel was completely gutted with only part of the lower level brick work left standing. Firemen told of briefly seeing at least two faces in the windows of the building before they were obscured by smoke. However, the management and army officials were emphatic in their insistence that there had been no loss of life (The Daily

Press March 8, 1920).

Approximately 200 guests and 170 employees were in the hotel at the outbreak of the fire. Guests, of course, gave differing versions of the event, owing much to the confusion. Several guests attempted to reenter the flaming building to save their belongings. Many of the guests left the hotel scantily clad, as they were dressing for dinner at the time of the alarm (The Norfolk and Virginian Pilot March 8, 1920). The guests were put up at the homes of army officers before being accommodated at other hotels.

It was estimated that approximately 20,000 people watched the burning, as it could be seen from a great distance (Figure 40). Boats lined the waters in front of the flaming Hotel Chamberlin as the night sky was illuminated. The event occurred on the eve of the Easter season just days before a full capacity would have been at the hotel. Many large New York tailoring shops had their Easter goods on display, all of which were lost. Also destroyed in the fire were Kimberly's store, the Adams Express Office, which occupied the same land parcel, and two nearby buildings associated with the Coast Artillery School (The Daily Press March 8, 1920).

Evidently the fire started in the rear, in the vicinity of the Palm Garden. The official cause was listed as unknown, with the possibility of defective wiring (Fort Monroe Fire Department: Daily Log). However, it was speculated that the

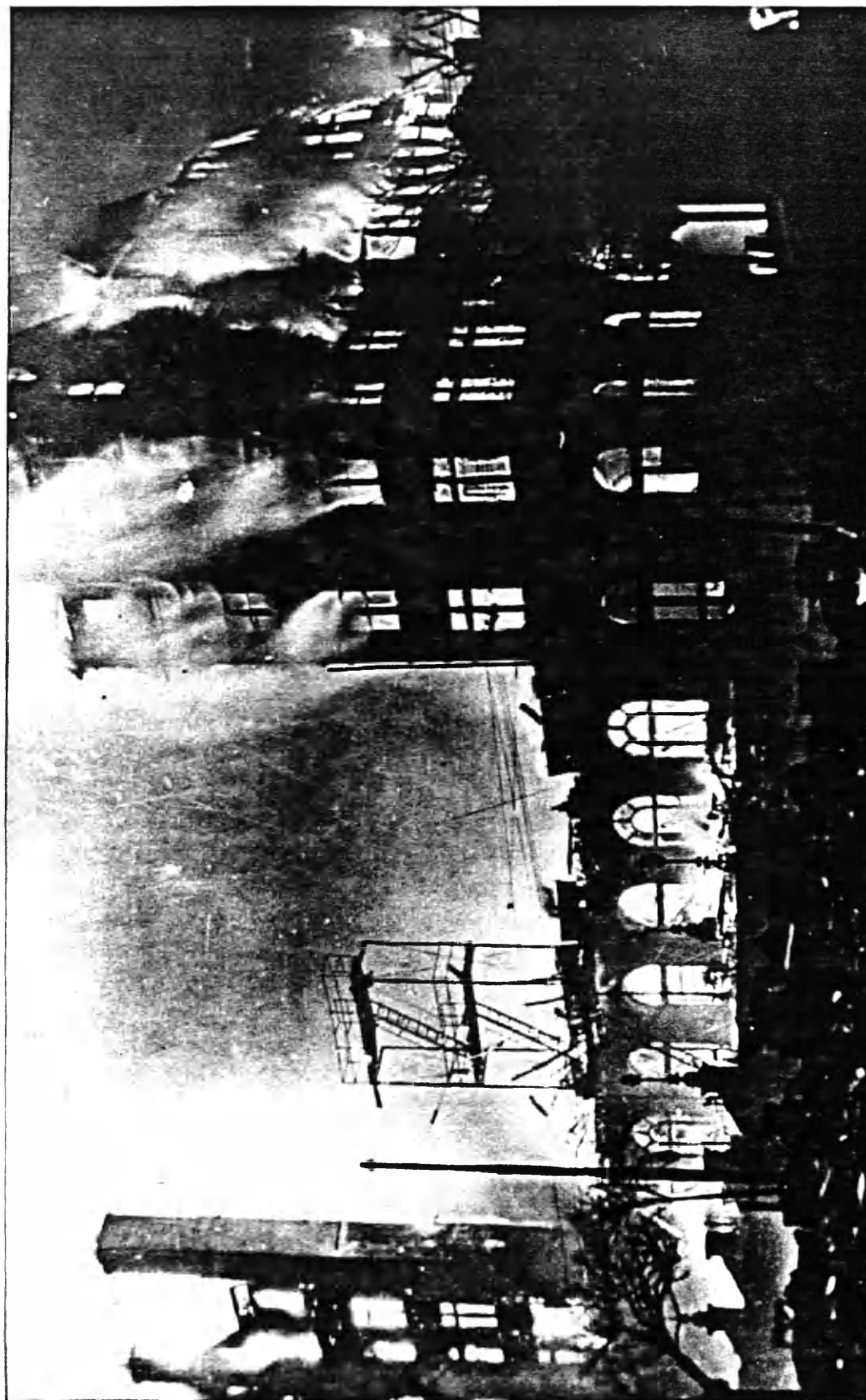


Figure 40. The Hotel Chamberlin ablaze on March 7, 1920. The official cause of the fire was listed as unknown (Burkhart Collection).



fire started at the office of the House Physician or possibly the Ladies Hair Dressing Salon. Some believed that the electric hairdressing apparatus were responsible (Syms Eaton Museum Files: 82.6.28-30).

The reported loss was estimated at 2.5 to 4 million dollars with the hotel having insurance covering \$350,000. A few days later many of the jewels and money reported lost were recovered from the fire-proof safe (Figure 41). By the next week, the Army had cleared the site and little but charred ground remained of the Hotel Chamberlin.

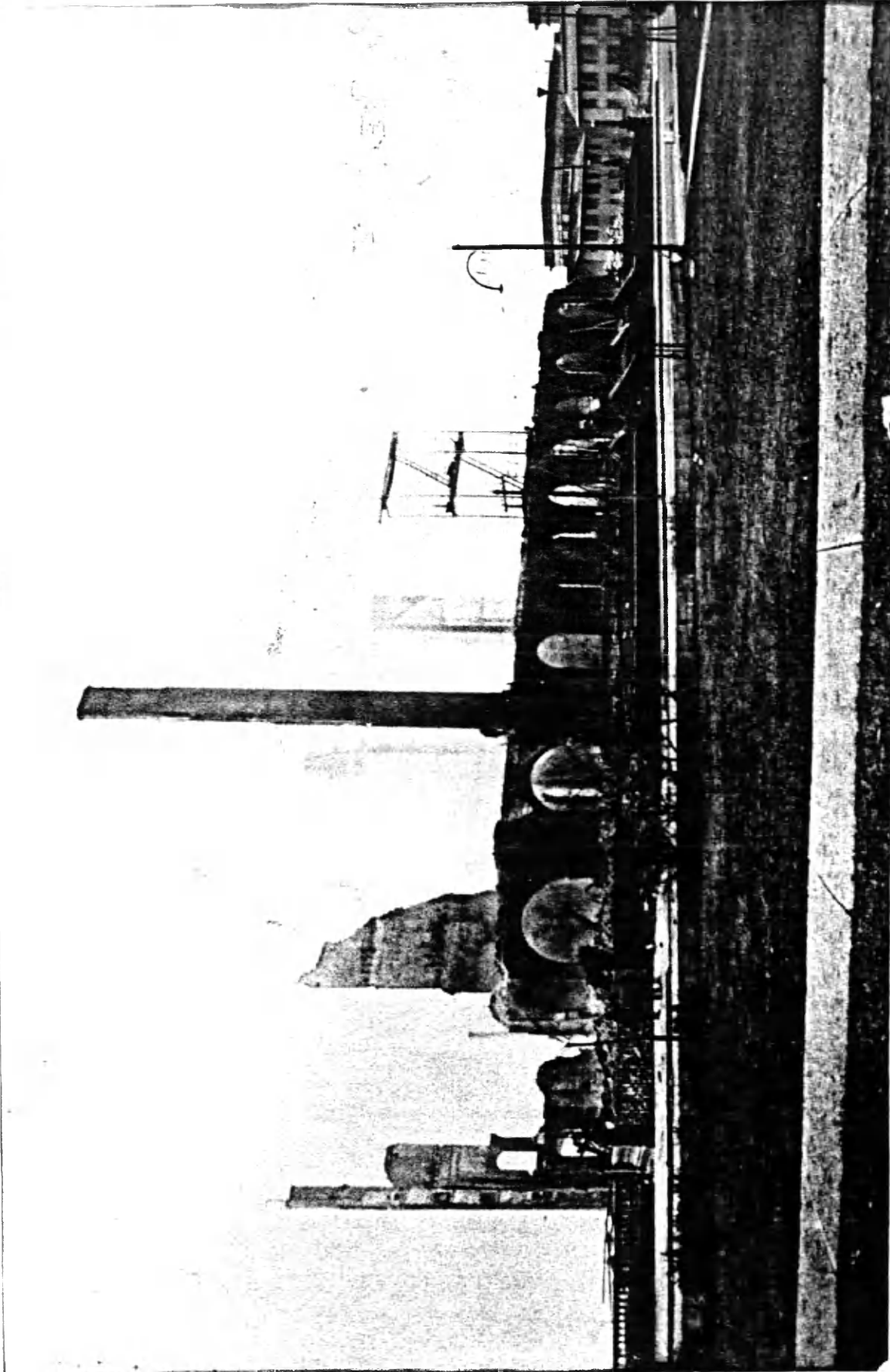


Figure 41. The magnificent Hotel Chamberlin was reduced to rubble in a few short hours (Burkhart Collection).

**Part 4**  
**The Chamberlin Hotel**  
**1928-1989**

After the burning of the Hotel Chamberlin, local businessmen, such as Raymond "Coca-Cola" Brown, were prompt in their organization of support aimed at encouraging the owners, the Old Point Comfort Corporation, to rebuild. Plans were discussed involving the building of a new hotel in sections so that one part might function during dull seasons, with the full facility opening when patronage increased (The Daily Press March 10, 1920). The hotel as an institution was declared to be a a matter of necessity to the Army and Navy as well as to the Newport News shipyard and the C&O Railroad. Without the Hotel Chamberlin, these businesses had no place to entertain distinguished guests (The Daily Press March 12, 1920). Despite local support, the Old Point Comfort Improvement Company announced on March 14, 1920 that the Hotel Chamberlin would not be rebuilt (The Daily Press March 14, 1920).

The subject of the reconstruction of the Hotel Chamberlin was of continuing interest to the local area. It was believed

by Gerrish Gassaway, secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, and Colonel Nelson Groome, Hampton banker, that the hotel would be rebuilt by the businessmen of Hampton and Newport News. Indeed, many men of the lower peninsula had parts in the planning, promotion, and eventual building (Casemate Museum Files). Several of the most influential were: Frank Darling, owner of an oyster packing plant and president of the Bank of Hampton; John Kimberly, who had once owned the Sherwood Inn; and Harry Holt, clerk of courts of Elizabeth City county and vice president of the Bank of Hampton. These men would later become the chief officers of the company responsible for the undertaking (The Daily Press April 8, 1928:11).

The grant from Congress that had allowed for the Hotel Chamberlin placed serious economic limitations on any potential owners and operators. The provision which called for the removal of the building in an emergency at the discretion of the Secretary of War and the fixing of specific rates for Army and Navy personnel made obtaining financing for a new hotel endeavor difficult. Holt authored a bill to allow the Secretary of War to make a grant of the land tract for a new hotel for a 50-year period with privileges of renewal for a similar period. In this way, protection was provided to the owners in the event that the land, ceded by the Commonwealth of Virginia, might revert back to the state. The local efforts were aided by Otis Bland, a representative from Virginia, who labored long and arduously to obtain the

appropriate legislation (The Daily Press April 8, 1928).

On February 17, 1922, an act was passed by the General Assembly of Virginia giving the consent of the Commonwealth, "to such individuals or company as may be granted permission by the Secretary of War of the United States to erect and operate a hotel upon such site as may be granted therefor on the United States Military Reservations at Fort Monroe, Virginia" (Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of Virginia 1922:19).

On September 14, 1922, federal permission was obtained to erect a hotel through a joint resolution of Congress. It was understood in consideration of passing of the law that at that time there was no hotel in the neighborhood of Fort Monroe and that the hotel "is necessary for visitors or anyone who has no quarters at the post to cross the bay in order to secure sleeping quarters and other accommodations" (67-2: Senate Report 492). The erection and maintenance of a hotel at this point was considered highly desirable by the War Department (67-2: House Report 1117). The joint resolution read:

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Secretary of War be, and he is hereby, authorized to grant permission to such individuals or corporation as to him may seem proper to construct, operate, and maintain a hotel upon the Fort Monroe Military Reservation in Virginia, for a term not exceeding fifty years, upon such site, according to such plans and dimensions and subject to such conditions and restrictions as may be approved by the Secretary of War: Provided, That the State of Virginia, by its

general assembly and governor, shall by proper and legal enactment give the consent of each state to the construction, operation, and maintenance of such hotel: Provided further, That after the expiration of the grant herein authorized or in case at any time previous thereto the building hereby authorized is destroyed by fire or other casualty then all buildings erected or other installations made on said site or the remains thereof shall be removed and the site restored at the expense of the then owner or owners of such hotel to the satisfaction of the Secretary of War, whenever he shall so direct, unless such grant shall be renewed for another term not exceeding fifty years, which renewal is hereby authorized in the discretion of the Secretary of War; And provided further, That no claim for damages against the United States shall be made by reason of the enforcement of any conditions or restrictions which have been approved by the Secretary of War or by reason of the removal of buildings and installations and restoration of the site thereof: And provided further, That the buildings so erected shall be subject to State, local, and national taxation as other property located in the county of Elizabeth City, Virginia (42 Stat. 843).

On February 28, 1924, the Old Point Comfort Hotel Corporation was chartered. Frank Darling was president, John Kimberly vice-president, and Harry Holt was secretary and treasurer. Other local businessmen held offices and chairs on the board as well.

By an agreement of April 30, 1926, the land was leased to the company for a 50-year period for the sum of one dollar. The lease agreement was declared void should certain conditions not be met: construction must have commenced within six months of the agreement date and must be completed within two years from the starting time. Furthermore, the building was to be used solely for hotel purposes, save the few shops

planned for the ground floor. A bath house could be erected at a place so chosen by the Secretary of War. The hotel was to be subject to the rules and regulations as they might be imposed by the Commanding officer at Fort Monroe and was subject to inspection by that person to insure reasonable police or sanitary regulations. Unlike the Hotel Chamberlin, whose existence benefitted many in Congress, the agreement stated, "No member or delegate to Congress shall be permitted to any share or part of this agreement or to any benefit which may arise after" (Elizabeth City County Deed Book 80:184-187).

The plans which had been approved at the signing were designed by Marcellus Wright. Wright began his own firm, Wright and Hoffman, in 1912 after completing his education at the University of Pennsylvania. He was also the architect of the Mosque, the John Marshall Hotel (closed in 1988), and the William Byrd Hotel (converted to Motor hotel in 1975, presently closed and for sale), all located in Richmond.

During the 1920's, men often formed "development groups" that assembled to raise money by selling and issuing bonds for building hotels and office buildings. Wright, as part of such a group, became involved with the designing of the hotel. He participated in a competition with 10 other experienced Virginia architects. Wright had honeymooned at the Hotel Chamberlin and so was aware of the dignity that building had projected.

Wright wanted his design to be representative of Virginia

and in keeping with the general architecture of the peninsula. The resulting design showed a colonial theme (Burkhart Collection: personal interview with Marcellus Wright, Jr.) and exhibited the symmetry of the Georgian style. This twentieth-century reinterpretation of the late eighteenth century was later termed Georgian revivalism or Neo-Georgian. This style had never before been used in hotel design and also presented some difficulty, as there was no precedent for a building of such style in such large proportions (The Virginian-Pilot and Norfolk Landmark April 7, 1928).

Occupying the same site as that of the earlier Chamberlin, the new hotel was a more modern and more compact version of its predecessor. The new building was 375 feet long and nine stories tall, topped by two large copper cupolas; it had 300 rooms.

Perhaps as a testimony to its strong construction, the building as it stands today retains these structural features. The exterior of the structure was made of local brick known as Hampton Colonials. The lower stories were trimmed with Indiana limestone while the upper stories were trimmed with light buff terra cotta. The hotel had concrete footings on packed sand. The skeletal frame consisted of reinforced concrete with brick supports and structural steel. In addition, the reinforced concrete floors and hollow tile and gypsum block partitions were claimed at the time of construction to render it virtually fire-proof (The Daily



Press April 8, 1928).

The hotel was financed through the Maryland Trust Company on an equitable basis. The cost of the hotel was estimated to be \$1,625,000. In order to finance this sum, \$750,000 first mortgage bonds were issued, \$525,000 was issued in common stock and \$350,000 in bonds of debenture. Robert Garrett and Son of Baltimore bought outright the first mortgage bonds. The bonds of debenture were distributed to large industrial, financial, and transportation agencies in the nearby community and elsewhere.

On September 23, 1926, the community held a sweeping one day stock-selling drive with the Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs being especially involved in the project. People participated in "Hotel Chamberlin Day" purchasing 100 or 200 shares. In tabulation, it was found that the original goal of 255,000 shares was exceeded by \$9000 (The Virginian-Pilot and Norfolk Landmark April 7, 1928). The large portion of the common stock remaining, \$150,000, was obtained by Wise Granite Construction Company and Marcellus Wright Sr. to equal the costs they incurred and their share of the profits.

Despite the local support, the project experienced many difficulties. There were problems in obtaining an operating company due to the restrictions of the grant. Two contractors, Wardman of Washington, and McLannahan and Becker of Philadelphia, had both been engaged in negotiations but due to delays in financing, abandoned the project. The grant

expired and was renewed by six-month extensions twice (The Virginian-Pilot and Norfolk Landmark April 7, 1928). Contracts between builders and the owning company were finally signed, and plans for construction were completed upon reorganization of the company on November 12, 1926.

The Old Point Comfort Hotel Corporation entered into agreement with Wise Granite Construction Company to construct the hotel. As per the agreement of July 1, 1927, the project was to be completed with furnishings and in a state ready to operate by May 1, 1928 at a cost of \$1,500,000 (Elizabeth City County Deed Book 80:329).

On this same date, the management of the hotel was leased to Walter Marshall (Elizabeth City County Deed Book 80:329), who in turn assigned the rights to the Old Point Vanderbilt Corporation (Elizabeth City County Deed Book 83:176). The Vanderbilt Corporation had hotels in Puerto Rico, Augusta, Georgia, and New York City. The hotel was to be operated on the American plan with the food and service of the "Vanderbilt" standard. Its menus were planned to feature Chesapeake sea food (Syms-Eaton Museum File 62.98).

Although the War Department had given its approval, Fort Monroe Headquarters did not want a new civilian hotel built because of the jurisdictional and administrative problems it would bring. After two extensions with no construction, General Callan, the commanding general of the post, and Colonel Russel P. Reeder, the third Coast Artillery District

executive, were anxiously waiting to notify the War Department of the failure to begin and nullification of the lease. However, ground was broken on April 30, 1927 at 10:45 a.m., exactly up to the deadline of the extension.

From the time of the burning and subsequent razing of the Hotel Chamberlin in 1920, the site had been bare except as a playground for the Quartermaster mules and horses. As many as 350 men worked on building the new hotel at one time. Favorable weather conditions and excellent transportation facilities, namely the railroad, greatly aided the operation. Once begun, construction was completed in eleven months (Figure 42). In addition to the work constructing the main hotel building, the boiler room and power plant of the old hotel were made into employees' quarters, a concrete breakwater was constructed and brick flagstones were placed about the building (The Virginian-Pilot and Norfolk Landmark April 7, 1928).

The Chamberlin-Vanderbilt Hotel opened officially on April 7, 1928 under the management of Luke Glennon (The Daily Press April 8, 1928). The completed cost was \$1,500,000 as was specified in the July 1, 1927 agreement. Having opened for business two days earlier, the hotel was filled to capacity as hundreds of guests representing the various parties involved in the project attended opening ceremonies.

In celebration, a banquet was held on that evening. The

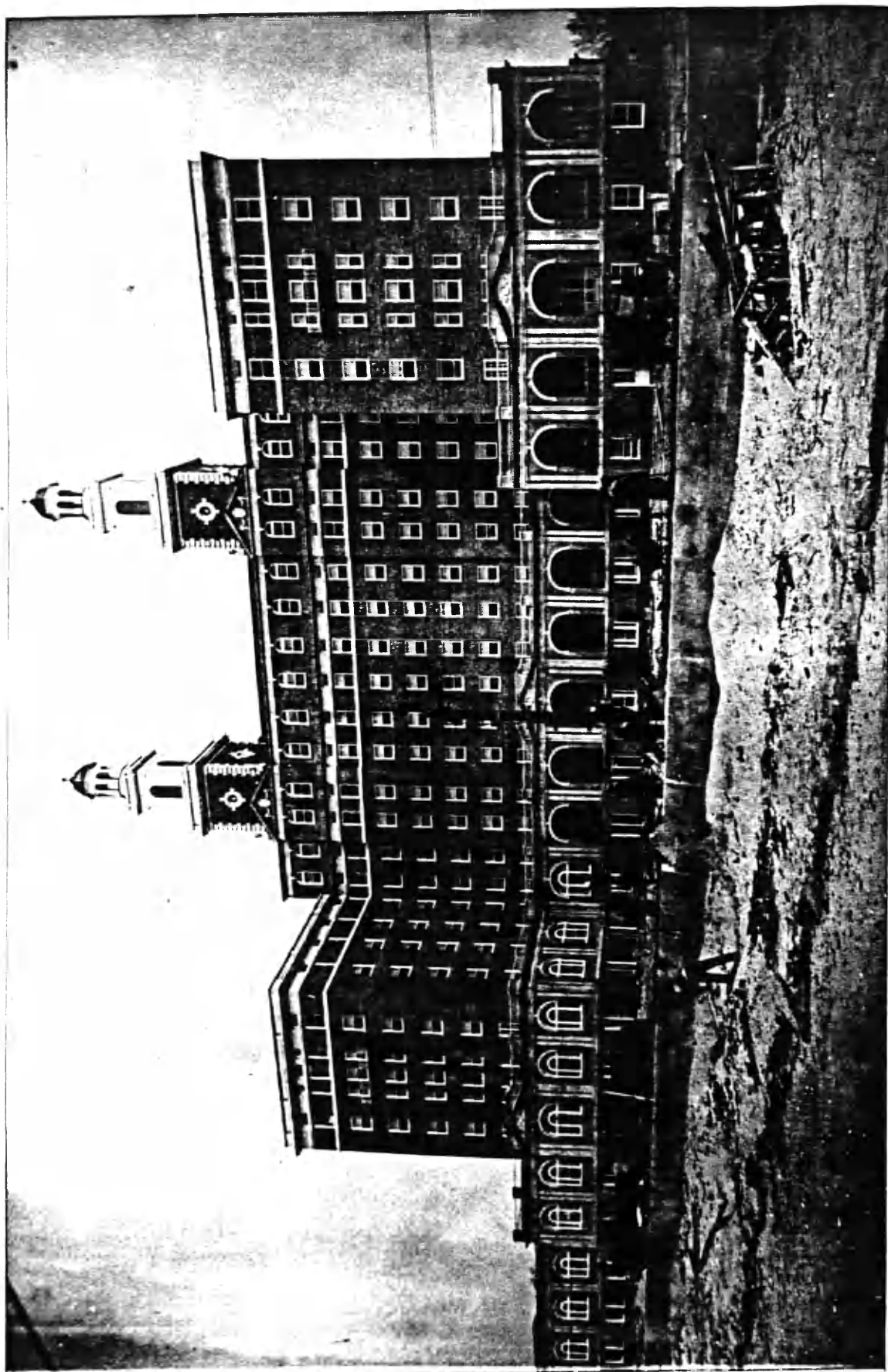


Figure 42. Workers attended to the seawall and landscaping prior to the opening of the Chamberlin-Vanderbilt Hotel in 1928 (Burkhart Collection).

attendants were addressed by Governor of Virginia, Harry Byrd, as he proclaimed the beginning of a new era in Virginia history. The governor compared the hotel with the progress of Virginia, mentioning the progress of the highways and Shenandoah National Park. Frank Darling, president of the Old Point Comfort Hotel Corporation, proclaimed the hotel to be a monument to the peninsula people of Virginia and a beacon of pride to the rest of the state. "It was home planned, built, and owned" (The Daily Press April 8, 1928). It was additionally remarked that "[The] civilian community of Phoebus will have direct economic influence from the hotel" for, aside from practical reasons, the hotel was also a monument of faith for the future of that community, renamed for the hard-working proprietor of the ill-fated Hygeia Hotel (The Virginian-Pilot and Norfolk Landmark April 7, 1928). Following the banquet, guests were entertained in the swimming pool area by a demonstration by the Fort Monroe swimming team, with a grand ball following.

As in the Hotel Chamberlin, the main entrance to the new hotel was on the east side. There was another entrance to the north (called "rear" in the article). (This entrance was modified in the 1960's creating a new main entrance from the ground level).

The original entrances to the hotel lead to the second story though it was referred to as the first or main floor. The ground floor was designed to be used for service

facilities, stores, and modest shops. This floor extends beyond the main sections of the building (The Virginian-Pilot and Norfolk Landmark April 7, 1928).

The ground level housed the 30 by 60 feet swimming pool which was filled with water from Hampton Roads each day. Adjoining the pool were rows of dressing rooms with showers, Turkish baths and a spectators' gallery. Soda fountains, stores, barber shop, and beauty shop complemented the area in a color scheme harmonious with the rest of the hotel (The Daily Press April 8, 1928). The main kitchen was also contained on this floor, as were the pantries, bakery, and other facilities: refrigerating plant, cold storage, scullery, store rooms, employee cafeteria, laundry and heating plant. Servants' quarters were located to the south on this same level (The Virginian-Pilot and Norfolk Landmark April 7, 1928).

Unlike the Hotel Chamberlin, which had guest rooms on the main floor, the first floor of the new Chamberlin housed public rooms only: lobby, lounge, parlors, writing rooms, main dining room, banquet room, and a la carte dining room. Wide enclosed porches surrounded a considerable portion of the south and east sides of the floor, with the southern porch measuring 25 feet in width and 120 feet in length (Figure 43).

One entered the lobby from the east or main entrance through a long corridor flanked with Georgian pillars. The

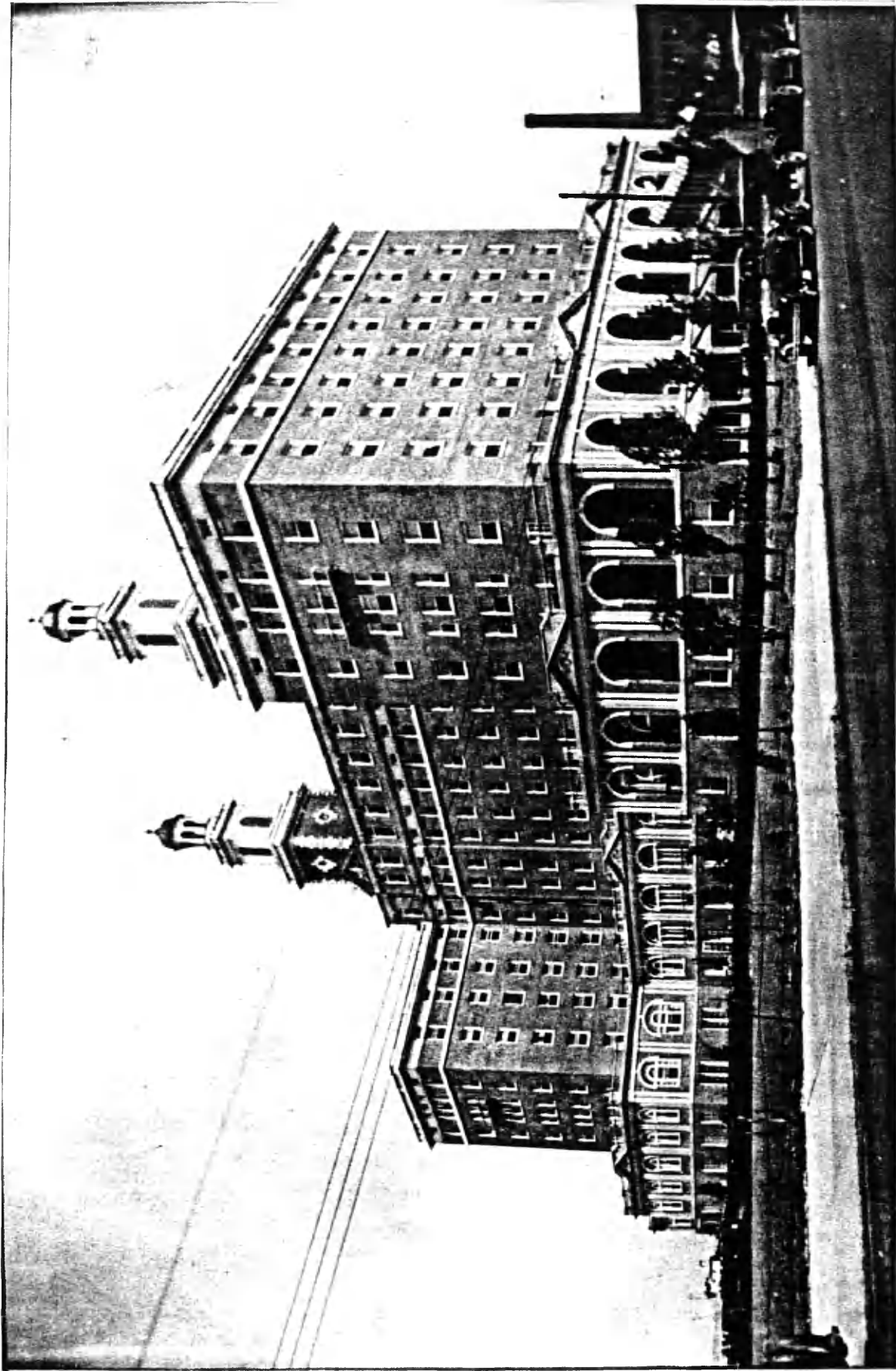


Figure 43. Shortly after the hotel opened, the central portion of the porch was enclosed. The main entrance to the hotel faced Ingalls Road (Burkhart Collection).

original color scheme was sea green and gold, with a splash of Chinese red and delft blue over all (The Virginian-Pilot and Norfolk Landmark April 7, 1928).

The interior designs of the hotel were designed by the firm of Marcellus Wright and the consulting firm of Charles D. Wetmore. The woodwork was pistachio green, frosted; the carpets in the card rooms, lounges, and music room were of deep-wood moss tones with touches of scarlet appearing in the upholstery. The dining room sported a slightly deeper shade of woodwork and was paneled in historic scenes by L. Helmholz Junker of New York. The children's dining room and the foyer, which lead straight through the building in a true colonial style, contained similar scenes (The Daily Press April 8, 1928).

The lounge had a comparable color scheme and was located to the immediate left as one entered. The office was to the right of the lobby area, in the center of which were the stairs leading down to the pool. Beyond the stairs lay the American plan dining room, then the serving kitchen and the ballroom. Opposite the main dining room was the a la carte dining room, constructed to allow its conversion into three separate private rooms. Food was to be received from the first floor kitchen into the serving room, so in actuality there were two kitchens. (Apparently only one, the serving kitchen, was ever actually made functional.) In order to have experienced resort personnel, the Vanderbilt Corporation



planned to have kitchen staff brought largely from the north (The Virginian-Pilot and Norfolk Landmark April 7, 1928).

The colonial motif was carried out throughout the hotel yet nothing somber in scheme or decorations was used. The hotel was not cramped and there was a certain amount of brass and crystal adding highlights. Chandeliers ornamented the main floor; additional lights mounted to pillars provided soft shading. "The chairs and other fixtures are of a bizarre design. Many of them hand painted in rich colors with red and blue still predominant," commented one reporter. Bizarre seemed to be the word of choice, as another commented: "Over and above all, however, is the brightness given by the bizarre decorations of chairs, tables lounges and other furnishings. Carpets in a more sober design and they soften the brightness of the lighter furnishings." In all, the hotel gave the appearance of richness without being gaudy. Furthermore:

There is a military social spirit that pervades the very air of Old Point Comfort. For centuries that air has been preserved and there is something in it that is strangely like the atmosphere a movie director creates for his historical military posts. There is just a bit of nonchalance, a bit of show of chivalry that is refreshing in these days of the "Jazz Age." There is an air of the old-fashioned intermingled with the ultramodernity of the vicinity (The Virginian-Pilot and Norfolk Landmark April 7, 1928).

Three elevators serviced the building giving easy access to the six floors, which housed 49 rooms each; each room had a bath. The single rooms had double connecting doors, so they could be made into suites. Some suites had larger salons.

Chinese red and delft blue were predominant overall, as all rooms were carpeted and furnished in the bright colors. An attempt was made to give each room a sense of individuality (The Virginian-Pilot and Norfolk Landmark April 7, 1928).

Though not quite ready for the opening, the Roof Garden, located on the eighth floor, had a glassed-in dining room and dance floor. The room opened onto a tile-paved garden which offered a magnificent view of Hampton Roads and the waters of the Chesapeake Bay. The area was serviced by a pantry and smaller rooms.

"In a colonial setting, in an atmosphere that breathes of the chivalry of the old south, the Chamberlin-Vanderbilt stands in architectural splendor amid landscaping of much charm and beauty," praised one newspaper. The landscaping was designed by Charles E. Gillette of Richmond with the idea of keeping a colonial atmosphere, as well as in keeping with the stateliness of Fort Monroe and the hotel structure itself (The Daily Press April 8, 1928). Winding brick flagstone walkways encircled the building, leading to broad terraced lawns and to the newly constructed concrete breakwater.

The hotel site, in close proximity to the water, had over the years become largely covered with sand. Tons of earth were carried in to provide an eight-inch layer of topsoil. Upon this base were planted several acres of lawn as well as native shrubs, flowers and shade trees.

The hotel offered various activities: golf, tennis,

indoor salt sea-pool, sea bathing, fishing, yachting, horseback riding, shooting in season, and therapeutic treatments, all "in the atmosphere of Fort Monroe with its brilliant gathering of officials of the Army, Navy and Air Forces" (Syms-Eaton Museum File 68.98). Most of the activities, however, were not available on the actual premises. Golf, for instance, was available to guests at the nearby 18-hole Hampton Roads Golf and Country Club.

The success or failure of a hotel is invariably dependent upon the transportation of potential guests. It was hoped that the numerous passenger steamlines which had aided the Hotel Chamberlin in its success would once again make the pier a regular landing place. In fact, the vice-president and general manager of the Norfolk-Washington steamboat was on the Board of the Chamberlin-Vanderbilt. It was still possible to leave Baltimore or Washington late at night and arrive via steamship early the next morning. Many steamlines, however, had discontinued services after the burning of the Hotel Chamberlin; others were no longer in business, since new modes of transportation, such as seaplanes, were encouraged to visit.

Railroad transportation was available such that "one might take the trip as if traveling in one's own bedroom." The Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad ran "almost to the doors" of the hotel, offering Pullman service and four trains a day. The Pennsylvania Railroad ended at Cape Charles; from there,

passengers were transported via steamer, which made a stop at Old Point Comfort.

Old Point Comfort was within one day's ride of half the population of the United States, and approximately 22 million cars were registered in 1928. Ferry service to Norfolk ran every half hour and was located three blocks away from the hotel for the automobile traveler. The hotel gave attention to the availability of ample parking space and garage space as well (The Virginian-Pilot and Norfolk Landmark April 7, 1928).

The hotel sought to cater to the tourist, and to the higher class of tourist at that. It was not seeking the transient or commercial traveler but rather was to be operated as a resort of the highest type. Upon the hotel's opening, it was stated: "It will cater to tourists who demand the best of facilities and will maintain in all particulars the high tone maintained by the old hotel in hewing that a place of the greatest importance for itself in the social life of the United States" (The Virginian-Pilot and Norfolk Landmark April 7, 1928).

According to Mrs. Goodwin (The Virginia Gazette November 4, 1987), "The Chamberlin Hotel in Hampton was a wonderful place to go if our dates could afford it." Mrs. Goodwin also noted, "Because it was located on U.S. government property, the Chamberlin could serve alcoholic beverages during Prohibition."

The Era of Prohibition began January 1920, and ended December 1933, during which time the Eighteenth Amendment, which forbade the manufacturing, transportation, and sale of alcoholic beverages, was enforced. Being on a military reservation, the Chamberlin continued to sell hard liquors at its bar, although Virginia had a state liquor monopoly and law prohibiting the sale of whiskey by the drink. The matter was quite a controversy but was finally amicably settled (The Daily Press December 4, 1941).

Hopes for the success of the Chamberlin-Vanderbilt Hotel ran high. There were obstacles to overcome but there was also the possibility that it would capture the fame of its predecessor. These hopes were harmed greatly by the panic on Wall Street on October 29, 1929.

Captain G. Alvin Messenger introduced a bill that when passed into law, authorized exemptions from local taxation for a period not to exceed five years for "the property of manufacturing establishment or works of internal improvement located on any U.S. Government reservation in Virginia, geographically situated within a county." This passage slightly alleviated some financial pressure as the hotel properties were exempt from taxation for that period of time (Acts of the General Assembly of the State of Virginia 1930:954).

The Chamberlin-Vanderbilt Hotel continued its operation, trying to attract business despite the overall economic

depression of the country. A promotional letter of 1930 read: "The hotel is eight stories high with roof gardens affording the most attractive views as far as the eye can reach. There are salt water swimming pool, enclosed sun terraces, fine dances and a house orchestra. The cuisine is unsurpassed featuring local seafood. This, combined with the maximum sunlight and salubrious climate, equals an ideal spot" (Chamberlin Hotel Museum Display).

It was also during this depressed time that the dock of the Baltimore wharf became shabby. Even when WPA funds were available to convert the structure from wood to concrete, nothing was done to make it a more permanent structure (The Daily Press October 10, 1965).

In 1930, after the local owning company obtained possession of the remaining stock owned by the Vanderbilt chain of hotels, the name "Chamberlin-Vanderbilt" was changed to "Chamberlin Hotel" although the hotel was still often referred to by the former name. "The Hotel Chamberlin," the name of the its predecessor, was also frequently used for the new hotel. With Charles Talbott still acting as manager, the Chamberlin Hotel was added to a large group of hotels operating under the direction of the Hotels Management and Securities Corporation of Washington D.C. (The Times Herald December 5, 1930).

The Old Point Comfort Hotel Corporation failed to pay the interest on bonds secured by the mortgage, and the company

went into a state of default (Elizabeth City County Deed Book 85:448). The Maryland Trust Company entered a suit with the United States District Court against the Old Point Comfort Hotel Corporation. It sought, as trustee to foreclose the \$750,000 mortgage on the hotel. The hotel closed its doors, releasing the operating company as well.

A Richmond newspaper commented: "The necessity that has forced a refinancing of the Chamberlin Hotel at Old Point Comfort will be regretted by Richmond people to whom the 'old Chamberlin' and the earlier Hygeia were accepted as Virginia institutions....when the new hotel was started, all Virginia had pride in the enterprise, and Richmond especially because a local corporation had the contract." Various reasons were projected as to the reasons why the hotel had not fulfilled the financial hopes of the owners.

Perhaps the vogue of Virginia Beach has much to do with it. Stockholders may have been right in saying that the hotel's patronage would be built if the sports that could be followed in the area were enlarged. Better transportation facilities would have helped in the first days of the venture, though these are now satisfactory. The absence of the fleet from Hampton Roads for long periods has undoubtedly kept from the hotel a colorful desirable patronage (The Times Herald 1931).

On February 10, 1931, the hotel was sold at public auction at the request of holders of less than 25 per cent of the outstanding bonds. According to The Daily Press (February 11, 1931), the "Chamberlin-Vanderbilt" was purchased by Joseph R. Kerr of Baltimore for \$100,000. Kerr represented the only

bidders for the Maryland Trust Company.

In an attempt to regain their original investment, a reorganization of the Old Point Comfort Hotel Corporation took place. The new company was called the Old Point Comfort Corporation. Junior stockholders and bondholders of the former company were to subscribe to stock in the reorganization company to the extent of 10 percent of their original holdings. The new company was to issue 15,000 shares of no par common stock to represent ownership of the company, and \$800,000 worth of mortgage bonds to replace the \$740,000 former issue of first mortgage bonds outstanding. Forty thousand dollars were needed to refund interest due on the bonds of the old company, and 20,000 dollars were needed to defray court costs.

A deed of February 25, 1931, conveyed the hotel from the Maryland Trust Company and Joseph L. Kerr to the Old Point Comfort Corporation, the Trust company having secured \$800,000 (Elizabeth City County Deed Book 85:448).

The hotel was scheduled to reopen on February 28, 1931, with Charles Talbott as manager under the name "New Chamberlin." Negotiations had been made with the Allen Hotel company, which was to lease the hotel for two years with plans to have it be open year round. (It had been closed previously from December until March.) The agreement with the Allen Company did not materialize and so operating privileges were assigned to the Chamberlin Hotel Corporation. The property



and building were leased for 20 years. The rental price was to be \$40,000 per year and to increase after 1934 by \$15,000 (Elizabeth City County Deed Book 85:450).

In celebration of its reopening, the "New Chamberlin" held a dance which was very well attended. The hotel offered both the American and the newly popularized European plan, in which meals and board were priced separately (The Daily Press March 1, 1931). Shortly after the reopening, the hotel was host to actress Vilma Banky and her husband Rod La Rocque as they toured with "Cherries are Ripe." Banky had starred in the "best movie" of 1927, "Night of Love" (Casemate Museum Files: Annie Haas Scrapbook).

For economic reasons stemming from the Depression, the hotel was not successful. Operating control was reassigned to the Eighth Realty Company in 1933. Employed by that company, the new manager was J. Wesley Gardner. It was later stated that Gardner was taking over a "white elephant" (The Daily Press June 16, 1936).

Under Gardner, business increased. However, the operation was not without problems. Gardner received criticism for the exclusion of Jews and his open sale of liquor at the hotel. By law, the sale of liquor was supposed to be a state monopoly, and was being violated. Spurred by the complaints of other hotels, Virginia's Governor Perry wrote to the Secretary of War about the problems. Upon investigation, Gardner defended the actions as necessary to

the operation of a resort (The Times Herald November 8, 1934). The litigation over the liquor problem was finally settled by a resolution sponsored by Senator Byrd and Congressman Bland, passed by both Houses of Congress and signed by President Roosevelt. The hotel, which had claimed to be under federal operating procedures, was declared to be subject to the laws of Virginia. Gardner and three employees were then found guilty by a Norfolk Federal court on 10 counts charging the sale of liquor and operation of a "common nuisance" (January 2, 1942).

Within a short time, The Daily Press reported on June 16, 1936: "Management of Chamberlin will change, New Corporation to take over from Gardner." A large percentage of the bond holders, with investments representing \$900,000, were dissatisfied with the management of Gardner. Before Judge Vernon C. Spratley, a man himself involved with the hotel from its inception, a request for a new lease for the management of the Chamberlin Hotel was presented to the Elizabeth City County Court, by a corporation "the identity of which was not known." Though the identity of the overtaking company was not disclosed it was said to represent men qualified in the hotel business.

The new company proposed to make the Chamberlin Hotel a major hotel and to select for its manager a man "of the highest type and experience." In the phrase of the decade, it was stated that the hotel needed a "New Deal." It was

intended "...to give this community the hotel that it needs instead of a boarding house at the wharf." In testimony, Colonel Montague, representing the investors, conveyed that the Gardner management was not popular. According to Montague, the operation had been "a pain in the neck" to the people of the lower peninsula and it was impossible for bondholders to realize profits if the community was not satisfied. He added that it was also unpopular with the military. Furthermore, Gardner had been delinquent in paying of rent. Frank W. Darling, as president of the Old Point Comfort Corporation, stated that taxes and expenses were unpaid and that "the hotel is not in the condition it ought to be." The company wished to enter into a new lease with a new operating company.

In defense of the Gardner regime, letters were read from former patrons attesting to the good service and fine accommodations. Gardner, it was defended, had taken the hotel when it was a "dead horse," when no one could be found to open and operate it. His attorney mentioned that after three years he had succeeded through advertising and improvements to build up the reputation as a "stopping place" and the number of conventions had increased. Gardner additionally stated that owing to the advent of the automobile and ease with which tourists could be transported from one point to another, the advantages of Old Point Comfort were not sufficient to attract visitors for long stays. The hotel could not charge rates

asked for and received by other American coast hostelries where beach facilities and other attractions were more adequate.

In order to maintain his position and reap the benefits of his work, Gardner offered a new lease which in many ways was recognized as more favorable than that of the other company. The lease offered by him gave a \$10,000 deposit for guarantee of meeting the terms of the agreement.

At that time Judge Spratley entered the court discussion declaring: "The criticism is that it has not been run as a first class hotel. I was down there on one occasion and saw slot machines being operated in a room off the main lobby, and I never before saw that in a first class hotel." Consequently, the lease was terminated and reassigned to the Chamberlin Operating Company.

Later that year, the Old Point Comfort Corporation sought relief from paying taxes on the assessed valuation of the property. While the general assembly of Virginia had relieved the Chamberlin of taxes for a period until the year 1935, the taxes deemed payable for the ensuing year were thought to be excessive. In protest, the corporation asked the court to make determination. According to The Times-Dispatch (December 18, 1936), Vernon C. Spratley, once again the presiding judge, set the valuation of the hotel at \$100,000 for tax purposes. This was despite the fact that the hotel cost \$1,500,000 to build and that in recent court proceedings, the combined value

of the hotel and furnishings was given at \$1,600,000. It was pointed out that the hotel bore the additional burden of paying the Fort Monroe authorities \$1500 per year for keeping the streets about the hotel in good repair.

When the rights were reassigned to a new company, Gardner was removed and Sidney Banks was put in as the new manager. In the opinion of many of the long-time employees, the Chamberlin Hotel reached its heyday under his reign (The Virginian-Pilot March 8, 1957).

Banks immediately undertook to make renovations and additions to the hotel at a cost of \$100,000. Special attention was paid to the development of summer resort facilities. An outdoor salt-water swimming pool was added (Figure 44). A cabana colony, beach fashion shows, and weekly aquatic events were planned to give a "swanky" beach club atmosphere. The promenades and lounges were redecorated. The Yacht Room, on the top floor, which replaced the Roof Garden, was blue and white with umbrellaed tables outside; tea dances were held there. From this vantage point, hydroplane "skeeter" racing could be seen on the water.

Banks employed a staff of specialized managers and directors. Guests could catch channel bass and blue fish under the guidance of the Sports and Game Director. The beach club activities were under the direction of the Water Sports Director, Harry Cochrane. Petty Wadill was a manager; Gordon

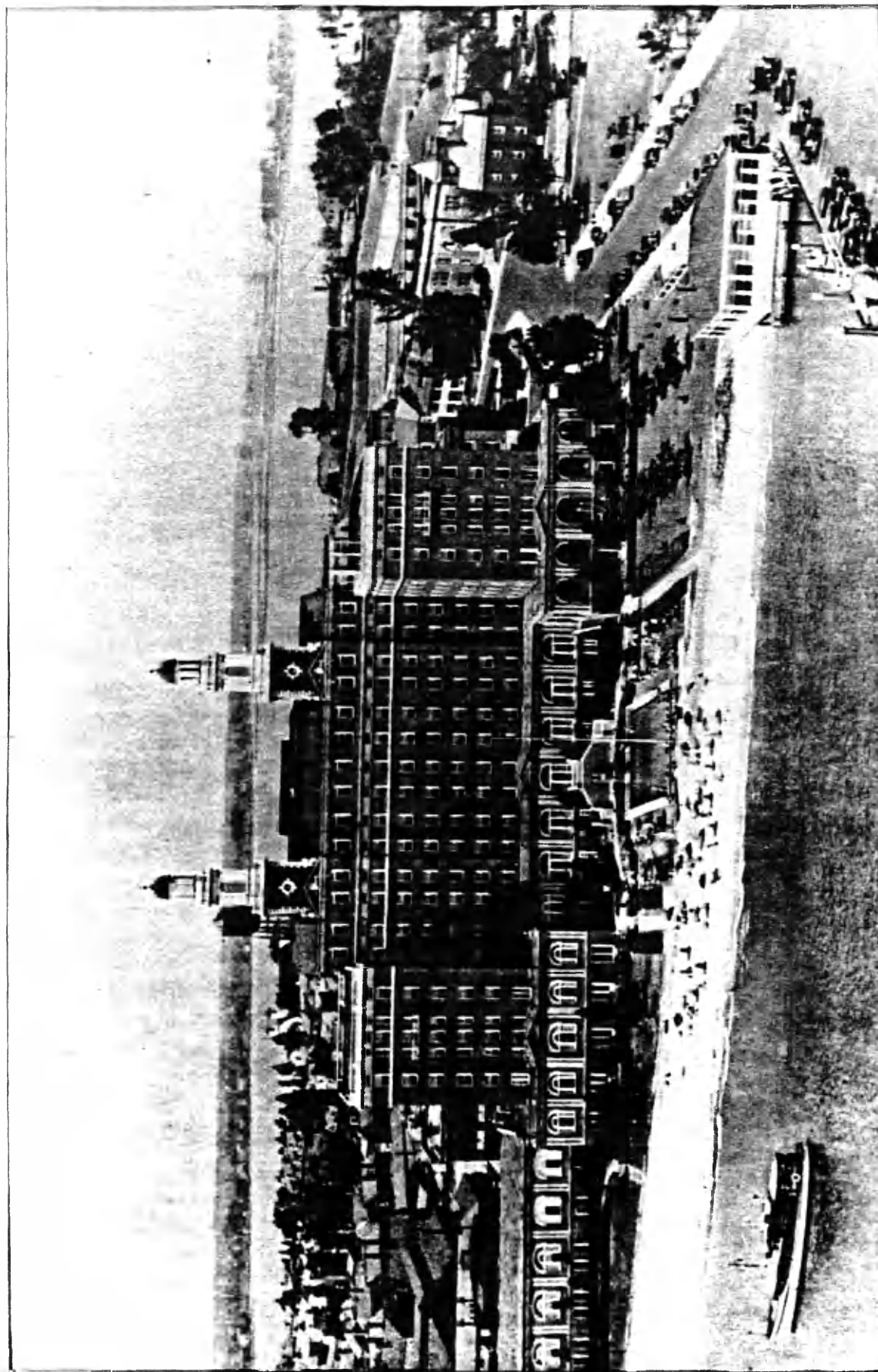


Figure 44. This photo shows the Chamberlin Hotel as it stood before World War II. The swimming pool was added in 1937 (Fort Monroe Casemate Museum).

Gardner, an assistant manager. Walter Pritchard was manager of the Chamberlin Country Club, and Al Houghton was the Country Club pro. The Chamberlin Golf and Country Club was the host of the Middle Atlantic PGA Sweepstakes as they played on the lengthened course. More attention was paid to the promotion of the hotel; and Ralph J. Hewlitt, as promotion manager, embarked on a 25,000-mile tour of the United States to distribute literature on the Virginia lower peninsula.

The public responded, and the hotel was now attracting conventions as well as the originally intended tourists. In 1938, the conventions held at the hotel included the Chevrolets Dealers Jamboroo, American Toll Bridge Association, American Forestry Association, American Rock Garden Association, Graduate Nurses Association of Virginia, and the Virginia Real Estate Association.

On May 1, 1938, the operating lease was extended to September 30, 1943 (The Times Herald June 12, 1942). The hotel experienced a slight set back when a fire in July of 1940 partially destroyed the main dining room, but overall experienced continued success. However, as a financial enterprise the Old Point Comfort Corporation had yet to recoup its losses. Its financial difficulties had been increasing for a number of years (The Daily Press December 4, 1941). Several associates, among them L. U. Noland, had started foreclosure proceedings in order that their investments in the hotel not be lost.

In 1941, at the onset of World War II, an act was initiated by the Navy Department in order to attain the hotel property for housing. According to the Navy Department, "The housing situation for families of officers and individual officers in the Norfolk area has been deplorable due to the heavy demand for living quarters on the part of Army and Navy personnel and civilians who have poured into the region" (Burkhart Collection: newspaper clipping file, December 4, 1941). Relief had been afforded married enlisted personnel and civilian workers through the construction of low-cost housing units. The hotel would provide 250 double rooms, 18 apartments, and dormitory space for those not aided by the housing.

The United States was entitled to take the property by eminent domain for military purposes. The owners were to receive \$500,000 in compensation and possession was to begin on the first of January 1942. The operation of the hotel was to remain under the operation of the owners on a co-operative basis with fixed rates to cover all maintenance costs. A letter was sent by Sidney Banks requesting all guests to settle their accounts by December 31, 1941.

An order vesting title to the United States Government was agreed to on December 30, 1941 stating:

The Chamberlin Hotel, Old Point Comfort, Virginia, and all estate and interest existing under and pursuant to said lease of April 26, 1926, between the Secretary of War and Old Point Comfort Hotel Corporation, and under and pursuant to said sub-lease of August 26, 1936, with Chamberlin Operating



Company, in said lands and in all buildings, improvements and appurtenances thereon and thereunto belonging, including all machinery, equipment, appliances, furniture, silverware, chinaware, utensils, linens, and other furnishings of any kind or character whatsoever, now situated upon said premises, pursuant to said lease, constitute trade fixtures essential to accomplish the business purpose for which said premises were leased...(Elizabeth City County Deed Book 109:282).

As stated by the Navy, the hotel was taken to provide housing for transient officers of both the Army and Navy and their families. According to a letter issued from the Headquarters of the 5th Naval District Naval Operating Base, the president had authorized the hotel's purchase for the use of transient officers and their families to alleviate crowded conditions until suitable domiciles could be found. Transient was defined to be for a period not to exceed 60 days (Casemate Museum File).

Originally it was planned to use the two large ballrooms as dormitory space for single officers. However, this never came to pass. Apartments were located on the second and third floors, and were of two, three, and four-room design. Launches run by the Navy were to shuttle officers from the hotel to the base (Burkhart Collection: newspaper clipping file, December 31, 1941). The price to stay at the "U.S. Hotel Chamberlin for commissioned officers only" was \$1.75 per day. The daily rate as a civilian hotel had been \$9.00.

Robert G. Rogo recalled his stay at the Chamberlin Hotel from April 10 to July 7, 1942. Rogo was stationed at the

Norfolk Naval Base, and he commuted there via Navy launch. In a letter to the Chamberlin Hotel Museum, he told of a naval custom of small boat etiquette used in the hotel elevators, which held that senior officers would enter last and embark first. Mr. Rogo lived on the third floor, as the uppermost floors, he said, were reserved for those of higher rank.

Local rumor surrounded the hotel during the war time. The hotel was said to house Nazi spies. According to one gentleman, his father had been assigned to Fort Wool to watch certain windows of the hotel for suspicious activity.

Once the Navy took over the hotel, it was reported that the hotel had again "become the only oasis in the State where mixed alcoholic drinks are served." Having been built on government lands and having been purchased by the Navy, the facility was under federal control, it was defended and could thereby receive supplies from outside the state and serve mixed drinks. The hotel was closed to civilians and only officers and their guests were extended the privilege bringing the status of the lounge to that of officers' club.

The Navy continued to use the hotel as a service to commissioned officers of the Navy and their families even after the war had ended. On July 15, 1944, the contract with the operating company of the Chamberlin Hotel expired. The contract was assigned to the Knot Corporation. They were found guilty of negligence and ordered to pay just compensation due to a guest injury which occurred during a

fire on the night of March 8, 1945. On that night, a woman fell 32 feet to the ground when the sheet with which she was lowering herself to the ground tore (The Times Herald July 17, 1944).

It was speculated that the Navy would sell the hotel to the War Department (The Times Herald March 28, 1946). General Devers, the commanding general of Army Ground Forces, recommended that the Chamberlin Hotel be acquired by the Army. The plan was to utilize the top two floors for offices and use the other floors to quarter personnel and transient officers; cafeteria services would also be available on the lower floors. It was declared by the Secretary of War that the War Department had no interest in purchasing the hotel. Army Ground Forces attempted once again to establish a leasing agreement between the War Department and operating company. The War Department, however, reconfirmed its original position (Weinert and Arthur 1978:247).

The hotel was scheduled to revert to Reconstruction Finance Corporation on March 1, 1946, as surplus and to be sold to the highest bidder (Weinert and Arthur 1978:247). The hotel was sought by Senator L. U. Noland, a one-time major bond holder and stock holder, and by another group offering to pay not less than \$600,000 (The Times Herald July 16, 1946).

The matter as to the disposition of the hotel went before a Senate committee. The Navy continued to operate the hotel

until the court cases involving the hostelry's bond ownership were disposed of (The Times Herald February 5, 1947). By an act of Congress, August 7, 1946, the Secretary of War and the War Assets Administration were authorized to reinstate the leaseholder prior to the Navy acquisition. As such, the property was to fall to those termed the lessee, in this case those holding first-mortgage bonds as of December 30, 1941 (60 Stat. 886-887).

The hotel eventually was sold on July 1, 1947 to Noland who paid \$531,000 (Elizabeth City County Deed Book 145:466). The sale was made under the terms of the lease of 1926, giving the commanding general certain inspection rights. Noland, in addition to being a senator, was also chairman of the board of directors of the Richmond Hotels Inc., a company which owned the John Marshall, Richmond, William Byrd, and King Carter hotels located in Richmond. The hotel was sold for an undisclosed amount by Noland and his wife to Richmond Hotels on December 31, 1947 (Elizabeth City County Deed Book 151:324).

Plans were made to redecorate the hotel, which was scheduled to open to civilian and military guests on March 15, 1947 (The Times Herald). The restorations and repairs needed to transform the hotel from its government status back to a hostelry for civilian trade were carried out at a cost of \$100,000. Upon its acquisition of the hotel, the Navy had agreed to return the building to its original state after the

war was over or provide adequate compensation. The Navy had removed the copper cupolas which topped the structure. While local rumor suggests that this was to install anti-aircraft batteries, more likely it was so enemy vessels could not use the cupolas as a sighting mechanism. Lee Paschal, president of Richmond Hotels and owner of the construction company which had built the structure, was given \$75,000 by the Navy to replace the cupolas but did not do so (Burkhart Collection: personal interview with Marcellus Wright Jr.).

The major internal change planned was the restoration of the first floor ballroom. The area had been seeing use as storage and service space. It was hoped that the restoration would enable the hotel to resume its pre-war dancing days (The Times Herald March 6, 1947).

From 1947 to 1949, \$300,000 was spent on improving the facility. Thirty thousand dollars was spent on a cooling system. Painting, recarpeting and the addition of showers to each room were among the many modifications made. The new and improved Chamberlin Hotel offered rooms with combination tub and shower baths which were furnished to provide "luxurious but not too expensive comfort" at a price of \$4 to \$20 per day, according to George Serrett, manager after the retrieval of the hotel from the Navy (The Daily Press November 2, 1949).

The Chamberlin Arena theater was presented on the Roof Garden which was serviced by three high speed elevators. Overall, the hotel contained nine lounges and a private dining

room. The main dining room was the Hampton Room with a capacity of 350; it featured southern cooking. There was a coffee shop on the lower lobby.

The new design paid much attention to providing features and facilities for conventions. The newly designed meeting rooms and their capacities were: the Virginia Room, 450; the Monroe Room, 125; the Chesapeake Room, 25; the John Smith, 40; the Algernon, 40; and the Fort, which served as a place for cocktails, receptions, and bridge, 140.

The lower level contained a flower shop, gift shop, newsstand, tobacconist, dress shop, oriental rug shop, beauty parlor, barber shop, garage, and travel bureau. Valet service and typewriter rental were also available. A school teacher was available to tutor children in grades 1-7. There was a nursery for younger children and a supervised playground.

Indoor shuffleboard, pool and billiards, darts, horse shoes, and bridge on Thursdays were presented as recreational activities. It was announced that for the first time in 15 years, the waters of Hampton Roads and the Fort Monroe beaches would be declared safe for swimming the summer of 1950. The floor of the roof garden was tiled for dancing, and the swimming pool was illuminated for night swimming.

The vacation season for the hotel was April through October. The Chamberlin Hotel received 30,951 guests the first nine months of 1949. Richmond Hotels published a pamphlet entitled Chamberlin by the Sea in which the hotel was

referred to as the "Saratoga of the South," a phrase also used by its predecessors.

According to The Official Hotel Red Book - 1949-1950 (1949:954), the hotel could be reached via railroad by either the C&O or Pennsylvania line. There were other modes of transportation servicing the area as well. The Norfolk and Washington Steamer traveled to and from Washington, and the Old Bay and Chesapeake Steamlines traveled to and from Baltimore. (The Old Bay Line and the Chesapeake Line had been rivals. Both went to Baltimore.) The Old Dominion Line, which had ocean-going paddle ships traveling from New York to Richmond, also stopped at Old Point Comfort (The Daily Press October 10, 1965).

According to the booklet Historic Fort Monroe (1951): "Today Old Point Comfort has one of the outstanding modern resort hotels of the country, the new Chamberlin, which opened in 1928. In front of the Chamberlin Hotel is the boat dock where the arrival and departure of the Baltimore and Washington steamer still attracts interest."

In 1951, the Chamberlin was deemed a "Conventioneer's Paradise" as more groups chose the hotel (The Daily Press May 20, 1951). According to George Serrett (The Times Herald October 31, 1951), no groups which sold tickets to gatherings would be served alcoholic drinks by the hotel. Such a policy change assured the abandonment of popular Saturday night roof garden dances. Due to the ruling of the Alcohol Beverage

Control (ABC) Board in an effort to enforce its rules on public drinking, the social event was discontinued.

In 1958, the lowest price for a room had increased to \$6.00. The hotel was open year round and advertised itself "For Tourists, Vacationers, Conventions, and Commercial Men" (Hotel Red Book - 1958:891). The manager was John T. Brindley who remained until 1961 (The Daily Press June 3, 1961).

In the fall of 1960, the wharf for steamboats was torn down (The Daily Press October 10, 1965). The Army told its sole tenant, the Old Bay Line, that the government intended to close the dock on November 12, 1959. This was the end to the steamship method of travel to Old Point Comfort. After that time, the name Old Point Comfort fell into disuse. The Pennsylvania Railroad was abandoned, leaving only the C&O and ferry service from Cape Charles and Norfolk. The steamboats, while surviving the Depression era, did not survive their commandeering for duty during World War II. (During the war times the lines were maintained by tall white boats of Edwardian vintage.)

James Powell was the manager of the hotel from 1961 until 1963 (The Daily Press October 9, 1963). During that time, various improvements were made as Richmond Hotels hoped to attract out-of-state-conventions (The Daily Press November 19, 1961).

The Daily Press (December 4, 1962) reported that the Chamberlin Hotel was holding an open house to allow the public



to view the \$250,000 facelift recently completed on various public areas. In the future an equal amount was to be spent on guest rooms. The color scheme was now turquoise, French blue and white, and gold. The northern entrance was modified to accomodate the majority of visitors who now arrived by car. Steps leading to the main floor and lobby were replaced by a canopied driveway (Figures 45 and 46). One now entered the hotel via the ground floor and took the elevator to the lobby. The roof garden had been air-conditioned, as had been all the meeting rooms.

The private Chamberlin Club was renamed the Old Point Club and was located in the former Fort Room, which had been a sandwich shop and tap room. Games were relocated away from the pool to the east end of the ground floor near the barber shop. The fountain room and terrace were to be open year round. These designs were planned by Lippincott and Margulies of New York, industrial designers (The Daily Press December 5, 1962). The price for a room was \$5.00 and up (Hotel Red Book - 1962 :934).

According to The Daily Press of July 9, 1964, rumors were circulating as to the Army's interest in obtaining the hotel as a home for the Continental Army Command. The rumors were denied by the Army as well as by the owners. Plans for the conversion were designed, however but never executed. In 1966, the lease for the hotel was renewed by the Secretary of Defense with expiration to occur on June 1, 2016.

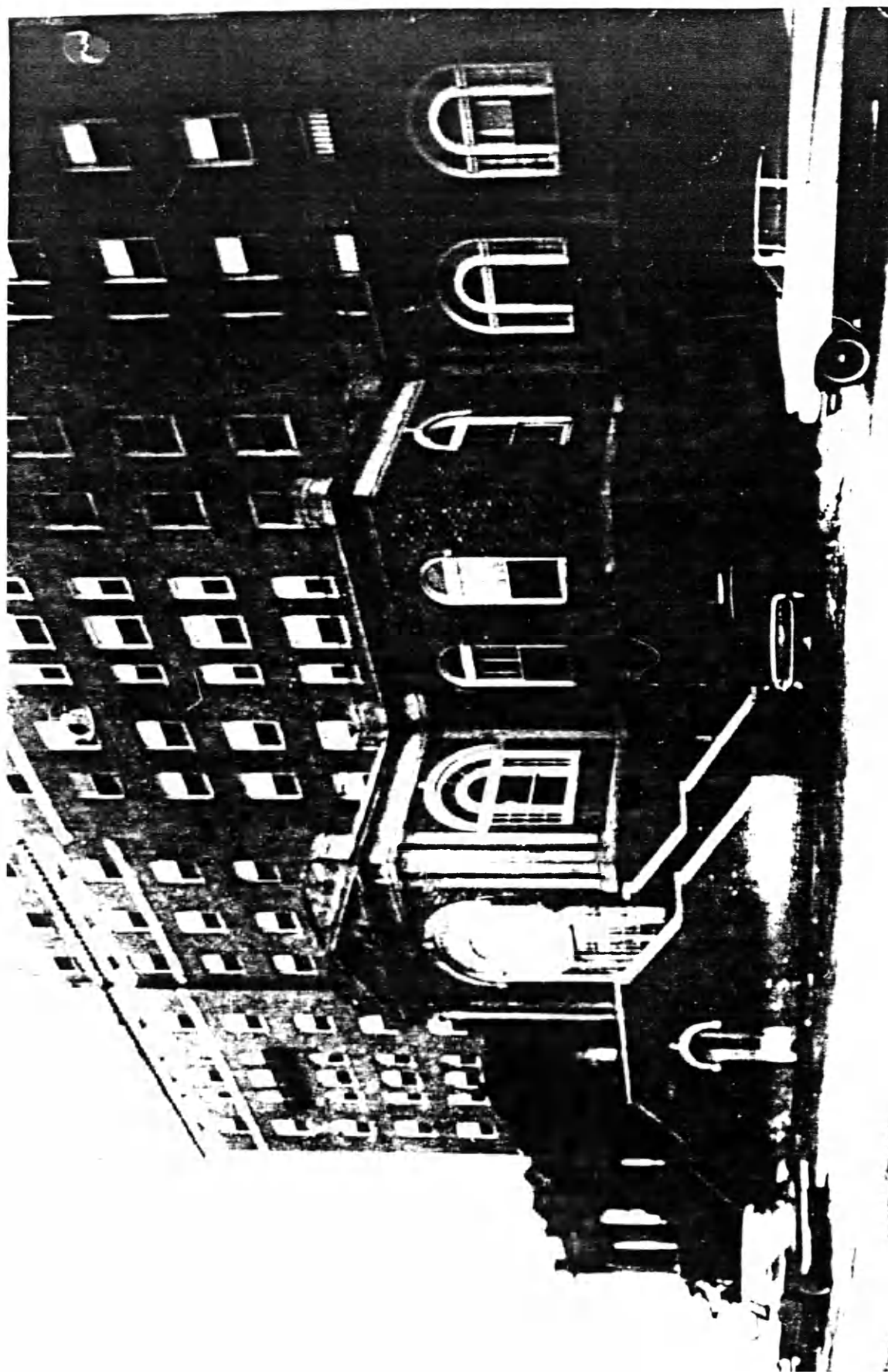


Figure 45. This photo shows the original north entrance to the Chamberlin Hotel. Inside, steps led to the lobby (Virginia State Library).



Figure 46. A canopied driveway replaced the original entrance in 1962 signifying the transition to an automotive society. Entering on the lower level, an elevator carries guests to the lobby (Virginia State Library).

H.H. Compton followed James Powell as manager and was to remain for seven years (The Times Herald June 8, 1970). During that period, the Chamberlin Hotel rapidly declined in facilities, services, appearance, reputation, and business (Hotel and Motel Red Book - 1968:1083). Transportation to the hotel was limited, and competition with the nearby tourist attractions of Williamsburg was increasing. Also influencing the decline was the fact that the new main highway from Richmond to Norfolk, Interstate 64, by-passed the hotel. The tracks of the C&O Railroad, which once made the Chamberlin Hotel the southernmost terminus, were also discontinued.

In 1972, Maurice Hester was appointed manager (The Daily Press May 30 1972). Hester remarked on June 14, 1972 (The Daily Press:6), "I see the Chamberlin as a combination facility serving the commercial man, military visitor and families who are looking for a summer resort hotel. We also serve as a weekend retreat for people living in nearby cities and as a convention center." Despite these claims, the hotel had gained over the years a less than favorable reputation. Local patronage had declined yet tales of the grandeur and glamour once accorded the hotel grew. Though military usage sustained, rumors of the closure of Fort Monroe frequently arose, placing the future of the hotel in question.

During the early 1970's, the hotel was used as a college dormitory. Students from Hampton University occupied a portion of the building due to the lack of housing space on

their campus. Shuttle service was provided to them to get to campus. The situation was not cost-effective and new on-campus dormitories were built (Personal interview with Mr. Eugene Johnson).

In the mid-seventies, there was a continuing decline in mid-week, off-season resort business. As a result, it was announced that due to economic conditions, the Chamberlin Hotel would be open on weekends only during the winter. It was to feature a special weekend package of \$25 rate for double room accommodations and meals for two (The Daily Press September 25, 1975).

By 1975, the hotel's capacity was down from 300 rooms to 141 rooms (Hotel and Motel Red Book - 1975:976). The Times Herald (March 22, 1975), remarked that the Chamberlin was one of three big hotels left in Virginia, in addition to The Homestead and Hotel Roanoke.

Mike Sullender, who began as manager in 1972, advanced this promotion of the hotel in 1977, "Take a Trip Aboard the U.S.S. Chamberlin" (The Daily Press October 9, 1977). At that time the hotel was described as having "300 rooms, swimming pool with Hollywood Blue bottom, and lion head spouts, a handful of wide parlors and huge dining rooms." Despite this gracious portrait, in fact one floor was totally non-operational and the top four floors were closed due to the energy crisis. The roof garden was a huge unused ballroom with spectacular views and flaky paint and plaster. To

envision "ladies in \$150,000 worth of jewelry...men in white linen suits and starched shirts sipping illegal whiskey" in such a place is difficult.

Despite the deterioration, Sullender remarked that the month of July 1977 was the best month in 30 years or since the Navy had had possession. Sullender stated that most people did not drop by the Chamberlin Hotel but came instead for a specific purpose, since travel was limited by the uncertain availability of gas. Consequently, there was a loss of out-of-state visitors, but the hotel hoped to be realized as a vacation place for families and small groups. According to Sullender, the hotel was attaining its goal to function as a recreational point for families, with most guests staying about three days (The Daily Press October 9, 1977).

The hotel was purchased by Vernon E. Stuart from Richmond Hotels Co. on March 1, 1979, for \$95,000 (Elizabeth City County Deed Book 542:871). At the time of the purchase only the second, third, and fourth floors were operating. The east end of the eighth floor was open only on Fridays. The facility was busy from Memorial day to Labor Day. Winter trade, however, was so weak that the hotel was only open on weekends.

At the time, Stuart owned a hotel in Bermuda, the Reefs, and two cemeteries in Hampton. It was his intent to refurbish the premises, add some resort attractions, and market the hotel as a convention site to attract wintertime business for

year-round operation (The Daily Press March 1, 1979).

As part of the renovation scheme, it was proposed to rebuild the ground floor lobby and elevators. Plans were also made to do the following: renovate the 66 largest rooms facing the water, redecorate two dining rooms, remodel the lounge, convert a meeting room to a piano bar, renovate the indoor swimming pool, refurbish the roof garden which had been closed in 1978, and build two lit tennis courts to increase the property's attractiveness as a resort. All projects were to be completed by July (The Times Herald March 1, 1979).

By October of that year renovations had been made. The main lobby which had been decorated in a color scheme of aqua and blue was changed to yellow and white with green carpet. The roof garden was redecorated in blue and white. The tennis courts were completed and a new patio with tables and chairs accompanied them. A game room and snack bar were added to the first level. The new Flagship Lounge and Hampton Room were also completed. The Chamberlin Hotel experienced a 30 percent occupancy in June, which by August had increased to 70 percent (The Times Herald October 22, 1979). Manager John C. Johnson reported 237 rooms available for occupancy (Hotel and Motel Red Book 1979:570).

Though physical renovations were extensive and costly, perhaps the most difficult yet necessary task was the repair needed to the hotel's most valued possession, its reputation. The reputation gained by the hotel over the years was not a

favorable one and in a sense the hotel was living in its own shadow. To remedy this situation, the hotel was promoted as a symbol of a by-gone era of luxury and opulence. This brief period in the hotel's history had been exaggerated as it was confused with the lingering reputations of the earlier hotels. Advertisements often alluded to the Great Gatsby, further encouraging the illusion of the Chamberlin Hotel. The hotel did not fail to capitalize on recent popular trends as well, introducing salad bars and country-western music to the establishment.

Business increased yet the hotel remained in financial trouble. After three million dollars had been spent in renovations, the bank reneged on its loan, the stated reason being that the lease with the government posed problems should foreclosure become necessary. Chapter 11 proceedings followed (Personal interview with Vernon Stuart).

In 1984, the Chamberlin Hotel, by its inclusion in the Fort Monroe Historic District, was put on the National Register and the Virginia Register of Historic Landmarks (The Times Herald October 24, 1984). At that time the north porch was enclosed to form a small museum area which is accessible through the gift shop and pays homage to the hotels of Old Point Comfort.

Limited funds had allowed for only essential maintenance to be made for a few years, and hotel occupancy had remained stable at a 50-60 percent rate. In 1985, over three million



dollars was spent for a facelift. Nearly 500 windows were replaced. Many guest rooms were redecorated in shades of maroon and green. The hotel had its own boat to tour the area and could carry 47 passengers. All facilities related to the hotel were operational (The Daily Press December 1, 1985).

From a distance, the Chamberlin Hotel is still a pervasive influence on the coastline of Hampton Roads, although now rivaled in height by the office buildings of gentrified Hampton. However, closer examination of the hotel's exterior reveals the physical evidence of its periodic neglect: its window frames split and peeling, the brickwork stained and discolored in places. Much of the beach has been subject to erosion caused by the water patterns of the bridge-tunnel. Perhaps if the hotel were in an urban setting, one would suspect the place abandoned and slated for demolition.

Inside the structure, there is activity, though not of the bustling sort. Casually dressed patrons can occasionally be seen crossing the lobby from the elevator making their way to the outdoor pool. The footsteps of uniformed military personnel echo on the black and white tiled floor of the long hallway. Employees and guest alike tell of the Chamberlin's ghost. Dressed in 1930's attire, she roams the third and eighth floors in search of a tea dance.

According to Mr. Stuart the hotel receives its patronage from equal portions of military, social, and convention trade. Six thousand dollars are spent each week on advertising to

encourage the latter sectors. Room rates vary from \$59 to \$79 with 191 rooms operational at a 60 percent occupancy rate. The second floor houses the Army Training and Indoctrination Command as well as foreign liasons offices.

The colonial motif, with special emphasis on Virginiana, is strong in the interior decoration. The a la carte dining room is now the Williamsburg Room decorated in pink with colonial reproduction accents. The names of the other meeting rooms bear a similar Virginian emphasis: Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Tyler, Monitor, Merrimac, and Federal. An exception to the colonial theme is the Flagship Lounge which sports a nautical motif. This motif is isolated save the ground floor which with its exposed pipes, vents, and low ceiling creates a ship-like feeling.

The south porch, once an expansive veranda (the trademark of a resort), has been divided and enclosed to form two convention/meeting rooms: The Monitor Room and The Merrimac Room. The main floor ballroom has a dropped acoustical tile ceiling. (According to Stuart, the room was added about 25 years ago. However, it is visible on early photographs.) The only exemplifying article of the era of construction is the beautiful Art Deco tile work of the indoor pool. This was recently remodeled and artificial grass carpeting now overlays a portion.

The park and gazebo adjacent to the hotel are the site of numerous wedding ceremonies during the warmer seasons. On

Saturdays one can see nervous brides hiding at the east entrance waiting to descend the steps from the hotel to their groom, family, and friends. Unfortunately, most often the hotel is not privy to profits to be received from catering these wedding receptions. Poor food and organization for several years made the attraction of this business difficult. The Chamberlin's food service is under the same management as the rest of the hotel and continues to improve.

The Chamberlin Hotel at present is still in the process of righting itself financially. Two-room suites will soon be available for purchase as time shares on the sixth and seventh floors. Proceeds from the sale of these are expected to pay for the three-year renovation project proposed for the rest of the hotel. The project is prompted by financial reasons and it is hoped that its success will result in a debt free hotel. The work is to be done by the same firm responsible for Barrier Island Station, a profitable time share community in North Carolina.

The proposed renovation will cost close to three million dollars. Nearly one-third of those funds will be to renovate 152 sleeping rooms. At a cost of approximately \$6000 per room, new through-the-wall air conditioning and heating units, furnishings, bathrooms, cable, lighting, and doors will be added.

Another costly item is the removal of asbestos. Public safety will be further enhanced by updating the existing fire

safety equipment. A new parking lot will also be constructed. In addition, the exterior of the facility will be glazed and sealed and 476 new windows will be installed. Though not included in the most recent remodeling budget, plans have been discussed to reconstruct the two cupolas which once adorned the structure. However, at present other priorities take precedence.

Meeting rooms will be renovated to include new carpeting, walls, lighting and air conditioning. Additions will be made to the banquet and dining room furniture and equipment. The pool and boiler room will likewise receive new operating equipment. Five elevators will service the hotel when renovations are completed.

A new motor ramp is to be constructed on the north side, replacing the present entrance. This will allow guests to once again enter the hotel directly to the main floor lobby.

It has been proposed to move the Army sector to the ground floor in the future thus giving the hotel more rentable space. At present however, monies will be spent to renovate the existing second floor rooms, doors, and carpeting, as well as replace space heat/air units.

While these renovations may seem a corruption to the facility, it is not the purpose of the hotel to remain historically authentic. Modernization is essential to the continued survival of the time-worn Chamberlin Hotel. In fact, it is this constant adaptation to new and changing

tastes that has allowed for the Chamberlin's existence for over 50 years, as well as that of its predecessors.

Crucial to the survival of each hotel has been the lingering reputation of the hotel or hotels before them. This influence which has compounded with each hotel, serves as a lifeline for the Chamberlin Hotel. The exaggeration of the accumulation of beliefs associated with the past hotels enshrines the present structure and has allowed it to overcome many of its shortcomings.

**Chapter III**  
**Hotels, Health Retreats, and Resorts:**  
**Their Origins, Reign and Decline**

According to Hepburn (1965:ix), whenever a substantial number of people of a region had more money than needed for ordinary living and enough leisure time to get away from it all, and there was a climatically and scenically desirable spot - a resort was created. Egyptians had resorts on the Nile at Luxor. Mongols retreated to the Vale of Kashmir in the Himalayas. Romans opened roads leading to various places in western Europe where mineral water might be used for health reasons (Vichy, Aix, Bath).

Hepburn contends that a resort signifies a self-contained area where all facilities and opportunities to guests are resort confined with the type of facility varying with the setting and climate. In addition, resorts share their primary purpose - to provide recreation, pleasure, relaxation and rest. From the days of Babylon, resorts flourished and were established in every region where four economic social elements existed: wealth, leisure, suitable setting, and accessibility.

The eventual emergence of the American resort was the result of several factors in addition to those specified by Hepburn. On a broad scope, the resort is a phenomenon of American life as a product of urbanization, industrialism, transportation, prosperity, and romanticism (Newton 1941:297). In consideration of this, the extent to which the hotels at Old Point Comfort bear these influences will be examined.

### The Development of the City Hotel

During the eighteenth century and continuing into the early nineteenth century, the inn and the tavern were the major means of accommodating the American traveler. These establishments were derivations of their English counterparts. In England, "tavern" referred to a place where one could find food and drink, while an establishment offering lodging was called an "inn." In America however, these functions of tavern and inn were combined and the words were used without distinction (Boorstin 1965:135). The English tavern was a place of social gathering and entertainment and occupied a prominent place in the lives of the lower and middle classes. Owing to this fact, it was often the first and most important building constructed in a new settlement. The first tavern traceable to the young nation was constructed at Jamestown around 1610. Colonel William Byrd commented: "Like true

Englishmen they built a church that cost no more than fifty pounds, and a tavern that cost five hundred" (White 1968:106).

The tavern was at times the site for public meetings, trials, and even church services. Buildings specifically suited to these civic tasks were built much later in a town's development. However, the primary function of the establishment remained to provide food, drink, and lodging usually for the overnight guest and his horse (Yoder 1969:95).

The earliest inns were small-scale enterprises, an extension of the innkeepers's home with his family directly involved in the daily operation of the establishment. The innkeeper acted as host, opening his home and his table to the traveler. He was by no means a servant but rather the master of the house (Yoder 1969:95).

Although the American taverns established a more public character than those of Europe, no particular style of building was associated with them. They were built on a domestic scale and were physically indistinguishable from a house. However, as required by law until the end of the eighteenth century, a signboard was posted on the exterior giving notice to the traveler.

The form of the inn was essentially the same as the colonial home. The internal arrangement featured a central multi-functional space serving as the family's main room as well as the dining room for travelers. The room or rooms for sleeping were located upstairs. The establishment



incorporated along this colonial homestead or plantation typology, gave the imagery of a dwelling with the service functions unseen (Burkhart: personal manuscript).

The earliest structure constructed as the Hygeia Hotel (1821-1862) was a building similar to the tavern and exhibited the plantation typology. The difference between the resultant hotel structure and the true plantation was the articulation of privacy afforded by the individual chambers of the hotel and the delineation of public and private areas within the hotel. Buildings such as the kitchen, stables, wash house, etc., were grouped in the rear service yard, which was often enclosed so as to form a courtyard.

Another feature of the inn, likewise incorporated into the early Hygeia, was the porch or veranda which was often oversized and served to accommodate disembarking coach travelers. The porch additionally served as a local social center, a place to observe the arrival and departure of travelers while gathering news or discussing politics. In southern climates, like that of Virginia, the porch also provided circulation and ventilation (Fitch 1948:12-13). With time, the porch came to signify the tavern itself.

The settlers of the new nation were confronted by a virtual wilderness and were hampered by the limited means of transportation. As much travel as possible was done by water, and the cities accessible by this mode were quickly established as centers of population, commerce, and trade.

However, because of the relatively short distances which could be traveled in a day due to the poor methods of overland transportation, numerous inns appeared in rural settings along inland transportation routes. The roadside inn was usually quite crowded, and so the innkeeper had little competitive impetus to provide anything other than the basic accommodations. Patrons occupied multiple bedded rooms often plagued with a variety of insects. Sheets were changed infrequently.

With the exception of the female family members who supplied the manual labor necessary for the operation, women were virtually unheard of in an inn setting. The unescorted female traveler was viewed as suspicious and usually refused admittance (Limerick et al. 1979:17).

The rural inn had close ties to the early American transportation system. In contrast, though the existence of the city inn was contingent upon travelers, it was primarily a social gathering place and more resembled a home in both appearance and in atmosphere than the "inns" of today. But by the close of the nineteenth century, as the needs of the urban sophisticate increased, the inn was replaced by the "hotel."

The new word "hotel" was to become common for the public houses accommodating travelers and strangers. The word was borrowed from the French, meaning a large private residence or town mansion (Boorstin 1965:135). Early hotels such as the

Hygeia Hotel (1821-1862) were basically large scale inns and continued the traditional inn practices of offering room and board, with the eventual addition of the long room which served as a public bar or parlor. Even though hotels had increased in size, minimal comforts were available in the early years of the nineteenth century. Originally the sharing of bedrooms or even beds afforded no private space for the traveller. When private bedrooms were made available in the early hotels, they were very small (Cromley 1979:25).

The prototypical American city hotel was the Tremont House which opened in Boston in 1829. With its opening, the entire concept of hotel building and hotel keeping was changed. The era of casual innkeeping was replaced by a period of intensive competition in which it was the guest who mattered (Dorsey and Devine 1964:186). Style, luxury, and innovations were incorporated to pamper the long-neglected guest, and the guest responded with unbounded enthusiasm (Williamson 1930:5). These truly democratic institutions were built on the egalitarian principle that all have right to luxury and comfort - if they can afford it (Williamson 1930:9).

The opening rate of the Tremont was \$2.00, per day making it exclusively for the wealthier class. The design by architect Isaiah Roberts emphasized use of public rooms and included numerous innovations for the pleasure, comfort, and convenience of guests such as free soap, locks on rooms, bowls

and pitchers in every room, the choice of single or double beds, and water closets. The Tremont was the first to employ desk clerks and bellmen (Dorsey and Devine 1964:189).

The Tremont was the largest hotel of its time and contained 170 rooms. Because of its massive scale, the Tremont represents the transition of the hotel building from a domestic to commercial structure. Architecturally, the Tremont incorporated elements of the Greek Revival, a style that would become the most public and important style of the era. The predominant architectural feature, however, was the large percentage of ground floor space allocated to public areas that offered no immediate financial return (Pevsner 1976:169).

During the 30 years before the Civil War, much hotel building took place in old and new towns alike (Williamson 1930:5). Striving to achieve the same quality and comfort, every city or town wanted a hotel like the Tremont to give visitors a favorable impression (Williamson 1930:29). For the next 50 years, hotels incorporated similar layout, similar elements of the Greek Revival style, and similar managerial attitude. The publishing of the plans in A Description of Tremont House with Architectural Illustrations in 1830 made them easily accessible and a standard reference work for hotel construction (Dorsey and Devine 1964:188).

The Tremont had but a few years to enjoy its role as the prime hotel. As more and more were built, hotels took on an

ostentatious and glittering form. It seemed with each new hotel the standards of elegance were challenged. The use of marble, mirrors, gilt, velvet, satin and plush fabrics was overwhelming (Williamson 1930:39). In an era when the size of one's stickpin represented respectability, wealth, and position, hotel clerks became famous for their garish displays (Van Orman 1969:101). The large size of the structures in effect made them their own signs.

The image conveyed by the new structures, as noted in the National Intelligencer (June 19, 1827), was "Palaces of the Public." Some also referred to them as "People's Palaces." It was further explained that Americans, lacking a royal palace to act as a center of society, were creating a palace counterpart in the hotel (Boorstin 1965:135). A Frenchman rambling through the American Society in the 1880's remarked: "Hotels are to Americans what churches, monuments and natural beauties were to Europeans" (Van Orman 1969:125).

Astonishing to the traveler from abroad was the high social position held by the hotel keeper (Boorstin 1965:144). As the hotel emerged, the hotel keeper, no longer a simple host, was usually a recognized citizen or in the midst of using his proprietorship to become recognized. He often had some subsidiary activity as well, such as running the ferry or general store - though this was to change as the profession developed (Yoder 1969:36). The importance of the planners, proprietors and hosts the likes of Parks, Phoebus, and

Chamberlin can not be underestimated. It was they who turned a dream into reality.

The proprietor had many duties, including obtaining adequate financing, setting rates, finding help, increasing patronage, and reducing the costs of food and beverages. It was said that only "born fools and educated idiots" joined the profession (Van Orman 1969:89). A proprietor had to possess the capacity to deal with many types of people, both locals and travelers. The proprietor and the success of his enterprise were also at the mercy of the public and local transportation operators. Those who succeeded did so with the aid of planning, diligence, ingenuity, effective cost-accounting, and luck. However, many left after relatively few years of service (Yoder 1969:46).

As an evolving profession, hotel-keeping was a risky business. The separation of ownership and management predominated. Often those who owned or built the building could not accumulate enough capital fast enough to keep pace with the demands for larger and better accommodations. Entry into the business was easier if purchase of the building was not involved. As with any business, when costs exceed income, exit is natural. Commonly establishments underwent a consistent turnover in ownership and operation (Yoder 1969:49). It is likely that such changes occurring in rapid succession were for financial reasons. The Hygeia Hotel

(1821-1862) was quite typical in its frequent changing of hands.

The hotel was a center for social activity of both a political and a commercial nature. Local people frequented the large lobby (which until 1850 was called the office), a room which could be enjoyed without spending money; it became a social center to the general public, continuing the role established by the inn (Williamson 1930:9). In large cities, organized clubs with private membership would meet in hotels. Early in their history, hotels sometimes became affiliated with one political party or clientele. As talk of politics or business ended, people would linger on into the bar or dining room close at hand (Williamson 1930:130).

Europeans greatly admired the size, organization, and lavishness of the table of American hotels (Williamson 1930:48). In fact, the greatest test of a hotel throughout the nineteenth century was its table. Its fame and fortune depended upon the quality, variety, and abundance of food. The public expressed great desire for style but good architecture and extravagant interiors were still second to food (Williamson 1930:192).

The management of the hotel was based on the American plan. Patrons were charged one price which included the room and four large meals, breakfast, lunch, tea and supper (Van Orman 1969:133). Prior to the Civil war, the American plan price was \$1.50 to \$2.00 per day (Williamson 1930:120). No

price reduction was made for meals should they be missed and the prices did not include liquor. In the early inn days, the guest was subject to the "potluck" of the innkeeper and food was served "the good old English way," placed on the table all at once (Williamson 1930:196). This practice was discontinued when menu cards appeared at the Tremont. Eventually the American plan was replaced by the a la carte or European plan.

Liquor was also an important commodity for the hotel to supply. Special emphasis was placed on the supply and diversity of liquor as well as its availability. Without the revenues generated by the bar, the four large meals would have been ruinous (Williamson 1930:143). The dollars lost in the dining room were made up in the bar. The bar also served to supply money to pay various other operating expenses (Williamson 1930:192).

Though whiskey was given as part of the army ration at Fort Monroe until 1832, its supply was always inadequate and in great demand (Weinert and Arthur 1978:47). As evidenced in the broad-ranging scope of the search of the Hygeia Hotel for a bar keeper in 1826, the bar was probably quite lucrative.

Many superstitions and lore accompanied the hotel trade. Among these was the custom never to close the hotel register (Williamson 1930:180). This would mean bad business for the rest of the day. The register was not only a means of keeping an accounting of the guests, but it also provided free



advertising to those businessmen who chose to write a little endorsement of their service or goods (Van Orman 1966:133).

Of the transient guests, those known as "commercial travelers" were the most important and numerous. In the 1830's, the proverbial "traveling salesman" peddling his merchandise and products accounted for 75 percent of transient guests. With increasing modes of transportation, the amount tripled to 200,000 by 1883 (Williamson 1930:123).

Unheard of in Europe, though quite familiar in America, were guests who actually took up residency in a hotel. Especially common in cities, these "permanents" were usually of the middle class and found hotel living to be cheaper than the cost of setting up household (Van Orman 1966:125,127). While hotels continued their services to the transient guests, much attention came to be focused on those who would stay for extended time periods (Williamson 1930:115).

Boarding houses specialized in accommodating such guests (Van Orman 1966:80). In larger cities, boarding houses were often clustered about hotels like satellites. They were a complement to the larger hotel offering luxury on a small scale (Blackmar 1979:80).

Transients, with respect to Old Point Comfort, were originally predominantly military men though this group expanded to include many civilians over time, as travel for pleasure became more popular. Also due to the hotel's close association with the fort, a great deal of military-related

trade was accommodated, such as wives and families who would stay for prolonged periods of time. For this reason, the early Hygeia Hotel (1821-1862) could be said to be somewhat of a boarding house.

Competition among hotels for business was keen. Early hotels often had runners or touters to combat competition. These men were ever-present at the place of guest arrival shouting the merits of his hotel to attract patrons (Van Orman 1969:96). Since there was only one hotel at Old Point Comfort and given its proximity to the arriving piers, the Hygeia Hotel did not need touters.

In 1884, E. L. Godhin, editor of the Nation (Sept. 11, 1884), described the pre-Civil War period as a time when the art of hotel-keeping "shot far ahead of the kind known in Europe" (Williamson 1930:48). Hotels increased in overall size, as did individual room size - becoming two to three times larger (Williamson 1930:53). The hotel also included adoption of every conceivable luxury-providing gadget and forms of service to outdo rivals and pamper guests (Williamson 1930:38). Throughout its life, the hotel would continue to be characterized by its large size and use of contrivances (Van Orman 1966:124).

As a result of the various amenities and services added to them, hotels can be seen as institutions that are representative of changes influenced by the manners and tastes of the public. Often they are referred to as "the thermometer

and barometer of our national civilization" (Williamson 1930:4).

### The Transition of Health Retreat to Resort

Many of the same influences affecting the development of the hotel similarly effected the concurrent transition of the American health retreat to resort. While the emergence of the hotel in America borrowed little from the European (Williamson 1930:5), the American resort can be seen as an extension of the European spa tradition combined with the tradition of the Native Americans (Fishwick 1978:30).

The Native Americans had long been acquainted with the therapeutic values of mineral springs, perhaps preceding the European awareness. In Europe, mineral water therapy was translated into a complex system of relaxation and treatment called hydrotherapy, which combined the science of baths - balneology - and the use of baths as a relief for diseased conditions - balneo-therapeutics (Fishwick 1978:56). On an individual basis, programs of baths and massage were calculated to make one feel rejuvenated (Hepburn 1965:xv). One of the most popular places offering such procedures was located at Spa, a city in Belgium. Its name soon became a common noun for a place offering mineral springs as therapy. These spas were sustained by the patronage of those released (temporarily or otherwise) from life's ordinary working

responsibilities which in most cases implied the patron's wealth. Later this "free time" was to be defined as leisure.

Among early American colonists, such circumstances were first enjoyed by the wealthy agrarian society of the South. Bath, located in what was then Virginia, was established as the first American health retreat by that group in the early 1700's. (Bath is now called Berkeley Springs, West Virginia.) The manners evidenced at the retreat, as well as the name, were imitations of the fashion of England's famed Bath. To visiting English travelers, the copying of English tradition was unexpected and curious in a nation so intent on establishing independence (Reniers 1941:36).

Soon a proliferation of springs emerged. During the summers of the South, the humid temperatures were uncomfortable and the valleys of the Blue Ridge and Alleghenies offered cool relief along with the curative powers of the mineral springs. A few days' ride over rough but passable roads brought one to the Warm Springs or White Sulphur Springs of western Virginia (Hepburn 1965:xii). Many, however, embarked on longer trips to the springs of Saratoga, Ballston spa, and Richfield, all in the state of New York (Newton 1941:297).

Advocated as the cure for almost anything, the water of the springs was promoted with liberal and clever advertisements (Williamson 1930:58). Pamphlets using the testimonials of patrons as to the benefits of the waters were

numerous. Even doctors submitted claims stating that the climate was helpful or that an affliction might be cured or at least eased (Limerick et al. 1979:19). Detailed analyses were published concerning the chemical make-up of the waters.

Spending money created by slave labor, the fashionables followed the paths first beaten down by the infirm, and so the springs became the opiate of the planter class. While no other class could accumulate wealth in the pre-Civil War, pre-industrial days as fast as the Southern planter, life on the plantation gave few opportunities to mix with others of one's class (Fishwich 1978:35). The retreats met the social needs of the Southern agrarian and growing Northern mercantile aristocracy.

Each retreat attracted a certain clientele and had its own character that was dependent upon the time and money available to its visitors. Northern establishments reflected a Puritan heritage and were often austere. The Southern retreats were more pleasure-oriented, catering to the Southern elite - but often lacked decent accommodations (Limerick et al. 1979:21). Those accommodations were rather spartan and consisted mainly of small cabins or taverns very similar to early inns.

With time, the pilgrimage to some favorite watering hole became annual. It became a common practice at the White Sulphur Springs for families who returned year after year to construct their own cottage or cabin. These could be rented

out when the family was not there. Records and descriptions indicate that these buildings, termed "Virginice cabins," were usually one-story frame structures with shed roofs that extended out to form a porch (Prolix 1837:34). This form was quite popular in the Southern areas:

...a warmer climate at once suggested plans more open and spreading than those of the North, as well as the general use of a piazza or veranda for undercover outdoor living and to shade the important windows from the hot noon day sun (Hamlin 1944:203).

The cabins were often arranged in long rows and given names such as Virginia, Paradise, or Carolina Row. Eventually these rows evolved into a continuous linear structure in which the integrity of individual units was maintained. Each unit had its own fireplace and opened onto a shared veranda (Burkhart: personal manuscript).

By 1830, the actual springs and their uses for health became minor. But there had evolved a spring-going generation who went to the springs out of social habit usually each July after the crops were harvested. Reportedly, not one-tenth of the throng that attended the crowded and fashionable places in the season came to drink the waters to regain health. "It was rather to rejoice in a superabundance of life and vigor" (Kocher and Dearstyne 1954:181). As transportation improved, health retreats were the thing to visit if one could afford it (Hepburn 1965:xi). The "Springs Tour" was established in which the purpose was to visit as many retreats in a season

as time and money allowed.

Matchmaking and social climbing replaced the therapeutic feature as the primary function of the site (Williamson 1930:226). People continued to visit the springs as health centers and playgrounds during the hot summers, but primarily they were fashionable watering places in attractive natural settings (Kocher and Dearstyne 1954:181). Some retreats, however, never emerged from the pall of invalidism.

The physical setting was crucial but the social setting was what launched the transition of a health retreat to a resort (Fishwick 1978:64). The retreats, at that point, predominantly providing recreation and entertainment, were no longer merely places offering mineral springs as therapy but were clearly functioning as resorts. They had emerged as the parade grounds of fashion and the marriage markets of the nation. Though improved health was the ostensible incentive behind the "waters" and "cures" which continued to be promoted on advertisements, most attended the resorts for the promise of romance, not health. However, the vestiges of the interest in health remained to become an implied function of a resort in the forms of rest and relaxation.

Fueled by the prosperity of the western Virginia springs, the owners and proprietors of the Hygeia Hotel (1821-1862) were quick to realize the potential of their establishment. The military patronage was not ignored but the qualities to attract other clientele were seized upon as well. The sea

bathing to be found at Old Point Comfort was equated with the salubrious nature of the mineral springs. Facilities were prepared to accommodate the ailing for long stays, and amenities were offered to make their stays more enjoyable while convalescing. The incorporation of the numerous and varied entertainments, recreation, and luxuries available was given extensive coverage in advertisements as early as 1822.

The name of the hotel itself was symbolic of health. Hygeia was the Greek virgin goddess of physical health and the giver and protectress of mental health. No specific myth is associated with her, and she is rather an abstraction of her father, Aesculapius, the god of medicine and healing. Her name follows her father's in the Hippocratic oath. But Hygeia is sometimes represented with emblems of greater efficiency than her father. Her snake is three time larger and she handles hers with dexterity, while his is carelessly twined around his life preserver or staff, the design of which has been stylized to become the medical emblem (Fishwich 1978:50). The message conveyed is essentially that the art of hygiene is more important than medicine - prevention better than cure.

Hygeia was not an infrequent accessory of the mineral springs of western Virginia. A detailed statue, carved from a solid block of wood, possibly cypress and painted gleaming white, adorned the dull red domed roof top of a circular temple of twelve columns at White Sulphur Spring (Reniers 1941:10-11).



The nature of the resort was susceptible to and contingent upon change. Saratoga, for example, was originally quite straight-laced as locals, suspicious of the amusements enjoyed by visitors, frowned upon their behaviors. Chosen as the ideal spot at which to establish the first temperance society in 1808, amusements were replaced by hymn-singing, prayer, and buggy rides, prompting travelers to fulfill their pleasure needs at the numerous, less severe springs located elsewhere. Within a decade, its economy depressed, Saratoga was forced to reenlist devices to entice the summer traveler back (Waller 1966). Associated with American springs since the early days at Bath, gambling appeared and attracted many. Later, track betting surfaced and eventually led to corruption. It is interesting to note that a prime competitor for the Saratoga track business was the club established by John Chamberlin at Monmouth Park, New Jersey. It is theorized that the fact that there were two such places to choose from probably saved Saratoga from being overrun and utterly ruined by the flashier type of gambler (Bradley 1940:204).

Many of the prerequisites for resorts were first seen in Northern resorts such as Saratoga. Billiards, usually associated with gambling, and bowling, then called nine or ten pins, were introduced in the early nineteenth century (Yoder 1969:117).

To the greatest extent, the guests of the resorts of the 1820's were comprised of the female family members - "mamma

and the girls" - as well as the traveling celebrities of the time (Bradley 1940:73). Traveling theater companies were introduced in 1869. Until that time only the stars traveled to appear with local players (Williamson 1930:123).

Diversions were important and mass entertainment was insisted upon. While attending the resort implied relaxation, the proliferation of activities, including riding, cards, picnics, taking of the waters, to say nothing of the most important activity - eating - created a rather hectic itinerary. Activities were not simply entertainment but a means to meet other guests and, therefore, quite crucial. So-called "games of chance," such as faro, poker, monte, and, craps were enjoyed (Bradley 1940:109). The games themselves created a division between winners and losers, and so gave some determination of status within the group. The ritual of playing the game in general served to unify the group.

Cotillions, hops, and balls, all aimed at the introduction of eligible young men and women, were momentous occasions and were strained by rigid etiquette. At Saratoga, a daily occurrence awarded much significance was "the promenade":

As early as 1825 this after-dinner promenade had become a rite, and it was to continue for several generations. Usually in couples, forming an endless chain and somehow obeying traffic rules, guests would stroll for half an hour or more. According to Charles Latrobe, you squeezed and were squeezed while introducing yourself into the chain which moved with the checked step of a funeral procession. But people desiring to see, be seen and

to mingle liked it (Bradley 1940:77).

The "Treadmill" of White Sulphur Springs was quite similar. By the 1850's the activities associated with resorting had become defined to the point of codification.

Until relatively recently, travel inside or outside the United States whether for business or pleasure, required a considerable amount of time, money, and planning (Beebe 1966:154). For these reasons, travel early in the country's history had been limited to the well-to-do. Early transportation consisted of the coach, wagon, canal or sail boat. The addition of the railroad, with its few thousand miles of track, and the steam boat, improved conditions and somewhat facilitated the emergence of the resort.

The American wilderness and seashore were barely accessible overland and the going was rough and dangerous. Despite the inconveniences, travelers had a certain determination to push on as if the difficulty provided additional proof of the resort's exclusivity. While establishments located on defined transportation routes did well, they often did not offer the same "seclusion and solitude," translated as "exclusivity and select nature," as others. At the springs it was said that one met with the "elite of society...for at Washington there is a great mix" (Fishwick 1978:82). While location and accessibility were important, a great deal of the resort's reputation rested on its visitors.

The social element of the resort was especially important to Southern aristocracy. Because of poor transportation generally, ideas about what was fashionable and "in vogue" travelled slowly to the rural Deep South. The only way to keep in touch with the trends was by travels farther north. Old Point Comfort, due to its location near the trade center of Norfolk and near the transportation routes had frequent contact with the North. Many were attracted by its cosmopolitan nature as its close association with the North caused the resort to quickly reflect new trends. Guests often took advantage of the opportunity to travel aboard the cargo ships which sailed the coastal waters from Georgia to New England, carrying agricultural goods in the spring and returning with manufactured goods in late summer (Limerick et al. 1979:27). The Hygeia Hotel (1821-1862) served as a place from which travellers could gather information before embarking on more extensive travels.

One of these stylistic trends was the Greek Revival period in architecture. In the North, the Greek Revival reached its peak in 1830, and its associated architectural style was used by opponents of slavery as it symbolized the democratic nature of Greek society (Fitch 1948:50). Basically, the style was an application of Greek features to massive structures. It was used in many public buildings as well as in the Tremont Hotel. The popular style was quickly integrated into the Hygeia Hotel structure. As the nature of

the hotel trade called for designs allowing adaptation to constant additions and alterations, the Greek Revival style of the Hygeia Hotel (1821-1862) exhibited many distortions. Typical of the style as it was continued in the South, it was greatly simplified by local craftsmen who lacked suitable materials and skill. In 1850, just as the Greek Revival style was attaining its greatest southern usage, advancements in archaeological and social research revealed the use of slavery by the Greeks (Fitch 1948:52). The style was abandoned in the North, where it was replaced by Gothic. In light of this, the South enthusiastically adopted the style. However, limited by its elements of form and balance, the Greek revival style could accommodate only so much in the way of variety and was eventually replaced in the South as well. After the Civil War, the style was viewed as rural and unsophisticated.

Each resort had its own season: in the South it was generally early spring, in the North it was usually later. As such, a circuit of resorts developed enabling the traveler to go from place to place visiting one for food, one for company, etc. As competition increased, there developed among proprietors a mutual awareness of the amenities offered by different resorts. As seen in the city hotel, the proprietor was obliged to provide the latest in novelty, improvements, and activities. A lack of proper facilities or the displeasure of a single guest could send the fashion-seekers to other places. Each new resort had to quickly strive to

outdo the others with fancy architecture and conveniences. As a result, a style unique to the resort was to emerge though subject to regional influences.

In accordance with the level of prosperity, new buildings were added, with no definable hierarchy, to accommodate the facilities and supportive functions. Often the scale of the overall structure of long rows of units was increased with the addition of another story. In order not to inconvenience guests, construction was finished quickly and took place between seasons. The addition of structures resulted in a clustering of pieces which through the 1820's and 1830's were assembled into resort hotel buildings. By the 1850's, these were united into a single building. The resulting structure - the resort hotel - represented a community in a microcosm as it attempted to supply everything imaginable for the comfort of its guests.

As the function of the site changed, so did the complexity of the interior spaces. Buildings came to incorporate interior public spaces specifically for use by patrons involved in various social activities. While resorts varied from region to region due to local skill and interpretation, most continued, influenced by the city hotel, to exhibit elements of the Greek Revival style. The resort hotel, in effect, was a reiteration of the city hotel, only in a natural setting.

As the attraction of taking the water and the appeal of summering at the springs tapered off, the seashore resort was to take its place as the pleasure spot of choice. The local climate was usually muggy; and because roads were located farther inland, the only transportation along the seaboard was by sail (Hepburn 1965:65). Encouraged by steamboat transportation, resorts such as Cape May and Long Branch, New Jersey, sprang up to cater to those wishing a change of scene and pace.

Few towns actually existed along the beachfront itself but rather were located in sheltered harbors and backwaters. These places were continually associated with bad water and illnesses. Edgar Allen Poe, in one of his most famous poems, in fact blames the death of his loved one on the sea wind as it blew, "killing and chilling my Annabel Lee." (Actually, it was probably pneumonia.) "Beware of Musketoes and ague. Don't go where you'll get malaria and chills and fever" was the warning issued by the Jefferson Hotel of Saratoga regarding Cape May (Williamson 1930:242). The call to the seashore, an outgrowth of America's increasing awareness and appreciation of nature, eventually prevailed, attracting even more to Old Point Comfort.

As the Hygeia Hotel (1821-1862) continued its refinements of bathing facilities and expanding services, the physical growth of the construction, addition after addition, was accompanied by a reshuffling of interior spaces, reflecting

the everchanging whims of the public, and included varieties of transitions from outdoor to indoor space. The exterior arrangement of the additions served to define outdoor space. The formal garden of the Hygeia Hotel (1821-1862), located at the front, allowed an unobstructed view of the shoreline and extended the activities of resort life into the natural setting. The veranda, from which the garden was accessible, had been monumentalized to the proportions seen in the hotels of Saratoga and Cape May. The original function of the veranda was to provide passage and had originated in the mid-eighteenth century for climatic concerns as well as to cater to rustic tastes (Newton 1941:301). But the guests' use of the veranda as a public space encouraged its adoption as a standard resort stylistic feature.

The veranda was a meeting place, a conversation area - a place from which to view nature without actually being immersed - an intermediate area between the outdoors and indoors. The promenades of the Virginia springs, Saratoga, and other places were conducted on the veranda, as were courting, gossiping, and card playing. The veranda was usually built on the side with the best view (Cromley 1979:17). It is interesting to note, however, that the gardens and lawns of the hotels of Saratoga were located to the rear or on either side; the veranda, site of "the Promenade," faced the street allowing for maximum visibility (Bradley 1940:77).



By 1850, the Hygeia Hotel, typical of other resort hotels, was an unusual conglomerate of the tavern/inn and the health retreat: a large wooden structure with a veranda stretching the entire length. The influences of the city hotel, especially the Tremont, were also seen in the structure, most noticeably in the scale and grandeur. Despite the unpredictable nature of the resort business and rapid turnover of owners and managers of the hotel, the Hygeia Hotel (1821-1862) was emerging as a rival to the springs of western Virginia.

Though the practice of hydropathy attained its first vogue in Europe some 400 years prior, it was not until the 1840's and 1850's, a period of great interest in things Roman and Greek, that it reached its height of American popularity (Williamson 1930:120). While bathing was thought by some to be the source of illnesses, various springs throughout the country experienced a resurgence of interest as others cast aside the superstition. During that time, the popularity of the springs achieved full blown scale. As the nation was struck by yellow fever in 1855, even more flocked to the springs, avoiding Old Point Comfort, because it was located so close to Norfolk where the disease had killed over half of the white population (Fishwick 1978:45).

The gaiety and frivolity of resorts was noticeably affected due to the growing political turmoil of the late 1850's. The hostility between the North and South was

reflected in the coolness between northern and southern guests (Waller 1966:116). Southern newspapers encouraged resort goers to stay away from the resorts of the North, going so far as to call those who advanced beyond the Mason-Dixon line "traitors" (Reniers 1941:192). Hundreds who regularly went north, encouraged by newspapers, patronized the resorts of Virginia, Georgia and the Gulf of Mexico (Waller 1966:117). At Old Point Comfort, the social climate was equally charged; but there was a slight advantage afforded to the Union by the proximity to the fort, even though the clientele was mainly southern.

Edmund Ruffin, a frequent guest on the spring circuit and visitor to the Hygeia Hotel (1821-1862), dedicated the remaining years of his life to his political position: that "no Yankee was fit to lick the boots of a Southerner's body servant" (Reniers 1941:196). A somewhat captive audience of influentials gathered to hear Ruffin who used the resorts as a setting to express his political opinions and plans of secession despite the fact that he was outnumbered.

In general, the health practices of the mineral springs waned with the Civil War with the increase of medical advancements, mobility, and appetites for new and more sophisticated experiences. Those attending the springs of Virginia after the war noticed a distinct absence of eligible bachelors, many having been killed or no longer having the financial means to attend. The women were reportedly starved

for romance. The statue of Hygeia at White Sulphur Springs was lost during the Civil War and her temple home eventually became a money-changers booth (Reniers 1941:272).

Before the Civil War, Old Point Comfort was known as a celebrated watering place and had provided the cosmopolitan link for the South in search of northern fashion and vogue. But the old clientele were scattered after the war and a new generation had arisen, who knew of it as a place to which pleasure seekers used to resort in ante-bellum days.

The war had physically and emotionally devastated much of the area surrounding Old Point Comfort. The Hygeia Hotel, its Greek Revival style embraced by the South as symbolic of its ideals, had been razed during the war. A much more modest structure, the Hygeia Dining Saloon, built in a different location on Old Point Comfort, bore little resemblance to the previous establishment and in name only recalled the fame of her predecessor.

#### The Growth of Leisure and Expansion of the Leisure Class

The end of the Civil War marked the beginning of what some refer to as "the Gilded Age" of America. During that period which ended with World War I, the country emerged as a rich and powerful nation (Platt 1976:10). The nation's increased wealth was reflected by changes in demographics, work patterns, and income distribution. There was a growth

of collective institutions such as hospitals, libraries, museums, universities, department stores, and hotels (Davis 1972:12). It was also a boom time for resorts. The study of resorts during this time reveals the gradual popularization of the vacation experience as it extended to the broadening urban middle class.

An economic system based on the acquisition of wealth has existed in various forms throughout history. As the possession of wealth inspires emulation and confers honor, a corresponding hierarchy of social classes can also be observed (Veblen 1934:29). In addition, a certain level of display of one's wealth or "conspicuous consumption" is a means of demonstrating one's reputation and place within one's social class. Leisure and recreation are pleasant vehicles for such display.

Leisure is defined as that part of life which is not occupied in working for a living or, in other words, the free time left after life's necessities are taken care of (Parker 1971:21). Recreation is the activities engaged in during that free time. Classes having more wealth spend less time working and are able to undertake more leisure and recreation. Originally, leisure time was not sharply differentiated temporally or spatially. Instead, economic, ritual, religious, and leisure activities were closely integrated (Parker 1976:21). It is a relatively recent innovation that

leisure has been "won" as a separate part of life (Parker 1976:33).

After the Civil War, the nation increased in wealth especially in the areas of business and industry. The country changed from a folk, rural agricultural country to an urban, cosmopolitan industrial power. The rise of the American city after the Civil War upset class relations as extremes of wealth and poverty were created (Davis 1972:1). Aided by mass immigration, the population tripled from 17 to 50 million people (Maas 1983:8). Differences in class, ethnic origin, religion, and living conditions became more apparent. The rich continued in their prosperity, while traditional middle-class values were scorned as new opportunities arose and corresponding social behaviors and standards were adopted as displays of wealth. Urbanism, it seemed, threatened the ideals of the home, family, and the traditional work ethic (Nickerson 1930:101).

Leisure, as part of the work ethic, had been viewed as being distasteful to the worker and only for the upper class, mostly urban professionals and successful merchants (Nickerson 1930:71-72). Few working-class families could afford the long vacation stays the privileged rich enjoyed (Harris 1979:101). However, with increased wealth there was a distinct decrease in the notion of the work ethic. A new attitude towards leisure arose as a revolt from the Puritan work ethic, and eventually prevailed (Harris 1979:103). Leisure, it was

decided, must be accepted and used as an advantageous outgrowth of social and economic changes; in effect, leisure was actually incorporated into work. According to Parker (1976:19), leisure functioned to broaden knowledge, to provide relaxation and diversion, and to allow for spontaneous social participation and personality development. Leisure was a moral and physical necessity to worker and employer. A new concern for efficiency in work, family life, and education defined the vacation as a conservative device to help strengthen basic social institutions (Harris 1979:103).

The Civil War also had prompted a "sanitary awakening" in America, a heightened awareness of environmental causes of disease. Overcrowded by the influx of immigrants, the city was associated with disease, the rural areas with health. The vacation ideology advocated escape from the city as preventative medicine as well as cure. The psychological as well as the physiological benefits were stressed as many searched for the clean and the good and the healthy (Blackmar 1979:79). However, not all shared the same ideals of rest or moral enlightenment. There was a growing cosmopolitan interest in the sophistication of European entertainment traditions which included holiday making and vacationing (Harris 1979:103).

The surplus wealth of the new industrial society created a period of semi-leisure: the "weekend." The same increase in wealth and time allowed the middle-class family an

opportunity to go away for long periods of time, taking the vacations and tours previously enjoyed only by the well-to-do.

Guidebooks and newspapers abounded with information as leisure was organized and packaged for the middle class. They were eager to join their predecessors in tasting the joys of leisure and pursuing the uplifting diversions of the full social season in the manner of "society." Resorts had long been chosen by "society" as the setting for such diversions and as a place to lavishly spend one's wealth as proof of material success. Citizens of more modest means or would-be "social climbers" were induced to emulate them.

By the 1870's, "vacation" had become a verb as well as a noun, an activity as well as a period of time (Harris 1979:102). The vacation became established as not a luxury but a necessity. However, church leaders warned that the extravagances of resorts would undermine moral values. Resorts, it was said, "are necessarily moneymaking in their inception and exploitation of all sorts of fads and a certain social vulgarity which in the end must leave its stamp on every person who frequents them" (Harris 1979:103).

By this time, more women were traveling alone or with another female companion (Williamson 1930:126). They were often joined by their husbands on weekends when business allowed. But men did not interact much with wives and children but rather sought out the companionship of other men.

This detachment of men from their families - a common occurrence in American society - was mirrored by the resort setting (Wechsberg 1979:193).

As the newly monied sought new lifestyles, a complex social hierarchy developed to separate the old from the new money - the vast from the not-so-vast (Limerick et al. 1979:45). American ideals, which founded a country based on the premise of equality and which shunned the class systems of Europe, were ignored in this social development. Private clubs, private schools, secret societies, and elaborate residences erected by the upper classes attempted to provide lines of distinction. Each resort exhibited a distinct character defined by its attraction of a clientele of like social and ethnic background, and similar economic condition. Thus, the class barriers erected in society at large were reflected in a social ordering among resorts.

At the core of the elite oases were the envied old family aristocracy of American Society, called by themselves "The Four Hundred" (Waller 1966:375). By 1870, Newport, surrounded by an air of aristocracy and seclusion, was the acknowledged and accepted summer center of American "society" with a character of opulence and luxury symbolized by million-dollar "cottages" built in the villa-chateau-mansion style (Newton 1941:313).

Other resorts seemed to develop a reputation for attracting a certain group as well. Bar Harbor was for the



aesthete; Moosehead Lake, for the sportsman; Cape May, for the ballroom athlete. The "palatial" hotels of Saratoga were in their glory days; Long Branch was the summer queen of the Jersey shore. Both locations attracted the faster New York crowd and were said to achieve a great commingling of classes (Klein 1978:35). Despite this claim, the clientele, like that at other resorts, was decidedly middle class - one rung below "society". The Hygeia Hotel (1863-1902) likewise drew its patronage from this group, not high society but the elite of perhaps government, manufacturing, publishing, etc. - those who could afford some of the same luxuries as the rich but to a modest degree. The likes of the Dukes, Astors, and du Ponts did not frequent the establishment, though their influence was felt as it trickled down to this and other resorts. The socialites brought elegance, style, and dignity, as well as discipline and a code of decorum, which gentled and refined the behavior of the mass of resort goers.

A specific resort season was recognized by "society." That season was from late June to early September. The season at the Hygeia Hotel (1863-1902), however, immediately preceded the societal season. As resorts became more popular, there was sufficient incentive to remain open all year round. This, of course, necessitated the addition of various technological innovations to deal with the colder weather.

The Centennial Exhibition of 1876 in Philadelphia gave a boost to national solidarity and stimulated further change.

Through the exposition, Americans gained an awareness of the vastness and variety of the country, making them anxious to explore. America's thirst for new experience and quest for adventure led many to the frontiers of Florida and the West, as the mountains and lakes took on an allure (Limerick et al. 1979:45).

Well-to-do Easterners became jaded by the Atlantic coast hotels as they were increasingly invaded by the general populace. Many sought out further vacation destinations such as Europe, hoping distance would keep out the masses. However, with the new appeal of Florida and the West, it became quite popular to forego Europe and "see America first," not only before Europe, but also before anyone else did.

Lavish hotels appeared in the most unlikely and nearly inaccessible places. The West and Florida stressed scenery, luxury of hotels, and ease of transportation to them, as track mileage was increased throughout the United States (Limerick et al. 1979:47). Railroad companies often selected the resort sites themselves, ran the tracks in, and built and operated the hotels.

## The Growth of Transportation

The method or medium of travel used was very much an index of one's social and economic position in life (Beebe 1966:154-155). How you traveled was who you were. No status symbol was greater than a private railroad car. Originally these were available only to the presidents of large companies but soon the practice spread to large stockholders. Eventually, they became available to anyone with money even if they lacked a railroad connection (Beebe 1966:179). A Phoebus resident commented in 1977 (The Daily Press October 9), "Folks had real money in them days and they came in droves. 'Came from all over top. So many folks had private railroad cars the company had to build a special side-track just to accommodate them." It is possible that this person is referring to 1890 when the line that had previously stopped in Chesapeake City (Phoebus) was extended to within one block of the proposed Hotel Chamberlin site.

A symbiotic relationship developed between the middle class and the railroad system as well (Harris 1979:102). Railroads regularized traveling and vacationing as they expanded to accommodate the middle class. In a sense, given its widespread network and relative cheapness, the railroad was responsible for the success of most resorts.

Old Point Comfort, however, proved to be an exception to this. As the Hygeia Hotel (1863-1902) gained a favorable

reputation after the introduction of Florida and California, the predominant form of transportation used by its guests was the steamboat. These multi-decked floating hotels were propelled by two great side paddle wheels located amidship. One might enjoy sleeping, dinner, and breakfast while cruising along at 20 miles per hour. The steamboat network was not as vast as that of the railroad and was necessarily limited to navigable areas. It was, however, accessible to urban coastal areas such as New York, Washington, and Baltimore, and was relatively inexpensive.

"For every fashionable resort, there is close by another less fashionable which has grown up as a reaction" (Amory 1948:121). Virginia Beach arose as competition to the reestablished fame of Old Point Comfort, claiming that, "The exceptional climate was the result of the reflection of ozone near the seashore, and its interaction with fir and pine trees" (Garnett 1887). While various attempts were made to establish accommodations for people of more modest means at Old Point Comfort, none was developed and so a market was provided for Virginia Beach.

#### Architectural Themes

By the 1870's, the resort had become the stage of an increasingly socially conscious society. The act of resorting now had been refined to the point of ritualization. The

resorts were leisurely and luxurious. Activities originating as an enthusiasm for outdoor sports had rapidly increased after the Civil War to the dimensions of a passion (Limerick et al. 1979: 45). Golf was just emerging as a pasttime and some played tennis. Croquet was the rage, as was bicycling. Though evening promenades were no longer a means of sufficient exercise for the American public, they were retained. They were especially loyal to this ritual at Old Point Comfort where the traditional stroll around the casemates continued.

Swimming was popular, though quite different from what is observed today. Women's bathing suits were of extra heavy blue flannel. The top covered all but the hands and head of the wearer. Equally non-revealing were the bottoms, in two pieces, trousers and skirt, joined with a heavy belt. The waist trousers extended to the ankle and the skirt was waist length below the knee. Long cotton stockings and shoes completed the ensemble which was topped with a bather's straw hat. Due to the extreme weight few actually swam but, as was the custom, showed themselves and occasionally waded. Men wore essentially the same but without stockings; bare feet served as the sexual distinction (Dearing 1986:41).

In addition to the physical activities, there were many social occasions such as dancing, card playing, gambling, and conversation (Hepburn 1965:xiv). The incorporation of certain rules of behavior and activities, as originated by the

upper classes, corresponded to refinements and elaborations in the resort setting.

It is not possible to isolate overall architectural themes in the development of the resort hotels at Old Point Comfort, as opposed to resort areas where more than one hotel structure existed at a time. Rather, the changes in architectural form evidenced in the early hotels at Old Point Comfort are identifiable as items of additive development. This phenomenon of additive development is typical of resorts, as is the speed with which they have changed. This rapid changing was especially noticeable in the Hygeia Hotel (1863-1902) which underwent a seemingly continuous series of additions. Most resort hotels began as small structures and added facilities as the need arose. Their continuous adaptation occurred for two reasons. The first is that the constant use and wear of the building is exaggerated in hotels by the rapid turnover of guests who are in effect actually consuming the hotel. The second cause of adaptation is the constant need to update conveniences to attract guests and stay competitive (Cromley 1979:12).

Even in the present Chamberlin, adaptations meant to please current sensibilities are evidenced in the indoor-outdoor carpeting covering the Art deco tile floor of the indoor pool and in the country-Western music played in the lounge created during the "Jazz Age." While these "innovations" are viewed by some as a corruption of historical purity of form, they are

only the most recent in a long series of such changes to the hotel.

In general, the earliest resort hotel building was one building extended by wings. The type that predominated was the wooden structure, identified by its long veranda. Unhampered by the restraints of high land value premiums of urban areas, the post-Civil War resort hotel was planned as a low bar - usually only three to four stories high. When needed, new additions were added as separate buildings, which were eventually united under one roof. Windows were placed with consideration to the view they provided to the interior, rather than to serve exterior concerns, and were grouped in horizontal rows. Inside rooms were often dominated by a fireplace (Newton 1941:310).

Resorts needed to promote a familiar and popular image of the "good life," yet one novel enough to reinforce that it was a special place, distant from everyday life. Often this was done with exaggerated scale and size. "In the effort to make them pay during their necessarily short season, their size increased until their vast length and customary cheapness produced almost unmanageable shapes" (Newton 1941:307).

Resort hotels flourished on a sense of individuality which was costly and not mass-produced. Usually, resorts within a certain area favored the same style of architecture, with individual variations from hotel to hotel (Newton 1941:307). The idea was to create a unique and fanciful

setting with a theme to complement the natural setting or local history. In Florida, for example, there was an attempt to create a Riviera through the use of Spanish, Moorish, and Italian styles (Limerick et al. 1979:13).

Gothic, with its elaborate ornamentation, was the popular replacement for the Greek Revival. Its stone elaborations were translated to wood with the help of increased precision through mechanization. The resulting intricate trimmings which faced structures were termed "gingerbread" (Newton 1941:302). The "gingerbread" style, characterized by its dormer windows and mansard roof, was often exhibited in the hotels of the late 1850's to mid-1870's, especially in Cape May and San Francisco. There was a stylistic combination of Italianate (a cube form, such as the brownstone, often incorporating a piazza), Second Empire, and whatever else owner and builder might decide upon found all along the eastern seaboard and exhibited by the Hygeia Hotel (1863-1902).

The siting of the various hotels on the military reservation was determined by the Secretary of War and military commanders, unlike other resorts in which specific location is a preliminary consideration. For most hotels, location of site was of primary importance and, of course, took into consideration nearness of transportation. Also of great importance were the aesthetic values of scenic



availability and the addition the hotel itself would make to the view (Cromley 1979:14).

Builders were quick to capitalize on a nearby waterfall, spring, or as in the case at Old Point Comfort, the smooth beach. This need of outdoor beauty is still seen as being essential to the success of a resort. Often man-made landscaping is used to complement the natural attributes of the site (Cromley 1979:16). The patrons' experience with nature is always tempered by the comfort and luxury of the resort hotel.

The primary stylistic feature of a resort evident in nearly all resorts of the nineteenth century was an expansive porch or veranda. Advertisements often featured the lengths of the establishment's verandas as enticements: porches increased in value as they increased in length. During the 1920's, veranda sizes were publicized in square feet to make them seem even more majestic (Cromley 1979:18).

The early resort period allowed women and men freedom from the restraints and ceremony of city life and allowed a freedom of movement and activity suppressed in Victorian homes. The lengthy veranda encouraged but did not force social interaction. However, as resort hotels increased the size of their own porches and verandas, freedom was once again limited by the ensuing social formality.

Glassed-in verandas took the place of open ones, offering a view but with protection from the elements. This refinement

was exhibited in the Hygeia Hotel (1863-1902) and the Hotel Chamberlin as guests were encouraged to sit "under the glass" for improved health. Gazebos, also evidenced at both hotels, were extensions of the veranda, offering a sense of protection, and coolness from heat, and added a romantic element to the scene as an ornamentation to the hotel structure (Cromley 1979:18).

Early in the history of resorts, detached buildings were built for activities such as billiards and bowling. It was not until the later nineteenth century with the aid of technological advancements that all of the facilities were united under one roof. Specialized settings, such as the ballroom and theatrical performance areas, were provided for specialized functions as public space was divided into a series of rooms intended for general to specific uses. Gone were the multi-purpose rooms; the dining room was no longer cleared for dancing. Outdoor activities were also allocated their own space, keeping the lawn as an aesthetic element, not as a site of activity (Cromley 1979:22).

As public buildings containing private spaces, hotels are unusual architectural types. As the first space a guest enters and often the center of activity, the lobby is the predominant public space. Lobbies provide initial direction to the stranger and set the tone or style of the establishment with their decoration and furnishings. The lobby of the Hygeia Hotel (1863-1902) symbolized the luxury and comfort the

hotel wished to extend to its patrons. This was also displayed in the private realm as well. The minimalist days of the inn gone; people expected the same if not better surroundings than found in their homes. The suite was paramount, containing a sitting room and bed chamber, and was decorated in a sophisticated but homey style.

As opposed to the sparse comforts offered by early hotels, resort hotels had great concern with comfort and less with architectural magnificence (Cromley 1979:26). However, the period of 1880-1905 has been referred to as the "Golden Age of Resort Architecture." During that time, a new era of wealth, ambition, and higher standards of luxury presented itself to American society. The flowering of this era was aided by advancements in materials, construction techniques, site selections, and the incorporation of the ideals of comfort and luxury into architectural style. One of the emerging forms was termed Queen Anne: although an unusual style for hotels, it was the style used for the Hotel Chamberlin (Pevsner 1976:172).

The resort hotels of this "Golden Age" were typically huge, wooden, generously decorated with porches and ornamentation, and susceptible to fires. However, the most interesting aspect of hotel architecture during this time was in the use and development of equipment to create greater convenience and luxury (Pevsner 1976:186). Often hotels were equipped with central heating, running water in the rooms,

lavatories, and the ultimate luxury - private baths (Hepburn 1965:xiii). Before the end of 1889, all "good" hotels had electricity (Williamson 1930:66). While the style of each hostelry is indigenous to its locale, the Hotel Chamberlin incorporated many architectural features found in the various contemporary hotels of New York, such as the Roof Garden and Palm Garden.

Elevators, new construction methods, and other technological innovations enabled different forms to develop and allowed for more vertical buildings - previously limited to a maximum of four stories. With its height double that of the nearby Hygeia Hotel, the Hotel Chamberlin could be seen from great distances and served as a landmark for those approaching Hampton Roads by water. This great monument also symbolized the point to which resort typology had progressed.

Further evidence of this progression is the fact that the Hotel Chamberlin was designed by an architect and was not the result of a series of additions. When designing a hotel, "the architect should be aware of both the character of the sector of the public for whose benefit the hotel is to be erected and the personality of the operator" (Architects' Journal 1970:11). The hotel is also affected by the reputations of its builders, usually the rich. This tends to affect the way in which the hotel structures are viewed. The reputation of John Chamberlin as a gambler makes the Hotel Chamberlin undeniably a gambling house in the recollections of many.

Though gambling had long been a resort activity, there is no further evidence to support this claim.

The resort society for which the hotel was designed had become detached from nature and more concerned with the artifices of ceremony. The formality of spaces displayed by the hotel alluded to the strict social hierarchies of the late 1890's. While the design of the other Old Point Comfort hotels had rambled from inside to out, the Hotel Chamberlin exhibited an internal focus. As a result, the natural setting was of secondary importance as the exterior lost its emphasis. One's place within the framework of the structure was quite clear at the hotel. There was always a clear distinction between the noisy turbulent world outside and the controlled environment inside which offered peace, luxury, and ordered human contacts.

Within the Hotel Chamberlin a series of interior courtyards supplied light and ventilation. Amenities and activities such as bowling, billiards and even swimming were brought indoors. A more elaborate form of hydrotherapy was once again sanctioned. In addition to the commonplace mud, sitz, mineral, steam, vapor, and medicated shampoo baths, many resort hotels like the Chamberlin extended an array of invented and patented baths as their allure: compressed air, immersion, photographic, and galvanic. Some opponents competed with nationalistic bids offering Swedish, Russian, and Turkish baths.

The Chamberlin exhibited an ordering of a series of carefully articulated rooms and spaces into a procession through the building. Of great prominence was the architectural promenade through the corridor - wide enough to act as a room itself - which ended in the grand dining room. Meals occupied a central place within the resort setting. While the fare was of great importance and the quickest way to identify a good hotel (Magida and Herbert 1983:20), the dining room was also a place to display one's finery.

Under the American plan, all were served en masse, giving guests a chance to see each other. The dining room gave a sense of how many guests were there. The room was usually unbroken so that it appeared even larger. "This is the only area in the hotel where such an enormous space is genuinely practical for the service performed" (Cromley 1979:24).

Formal dining with many courses of food was predominant. Voluptuous eating and drinking became the hallmark of success in wealthy circles; champagne was the drink (Jones 1971:123). With the change over to the European plan by hotels in cities, each dining party occupied a separate table. This allowed for the altering of the shape of the typical long, narrow, barracks-like dining room. Resort hotels, however, retained the American plan. Patrons continued to dine en masse at the Hotel Chamberlin, though the dining room was of a distinctive Greek Cross shape.

With the increased popularity of the resort, an entire sector of "resort specialists" had arisen. A resort hotel was too big an investment and too complex a business to be entrusted to amateurs (Limerick et al. 1979:47). Professional managers oversaw "the working of this many cog-wheeled machine and take note on the actions of its various parts," earning wages equal to that of a supreme court justice (Limerick et al. 1979:47). Food, laundry, and health experts were also involved. Stock company involvement became the standard as resort hotels became the assets of corporations. The evolution of the resort from the "ma and pa" operation to the realm of big business was complete.

Springs and seashores remained popular through the turn of the century, offering mild recreation and what was now accepted as a healthy climate. One such resort to reach its peak of popularity at this time was Atlantic City.

Urban growth and mass transit enabled the development of resort areas near urban centers. The leisure time of the working class, though limited, became filled by the amusement industry. Atlantic City was an entire town designed to replicate the resort of the rich.

Atlantic City had colossal turnover, was urban in spirit, and had a grandiose display of kaleidoscopic materialism. It appealed to and was designed for the lower middle class, those who could afford some leisure to a modest degree. It was that

class that composed the greatest number of visitors and the largest part of Atlantic City's revenue (Funnell 1983:19).

Even down to its name, Atlantic City was a planned community (Funnell 1983:5). It is difficult to start a resort since patrons must be drawn either from existing established places or enticed by the new resort's features. Advertising was used by Atlantic City to a great extent to accomplish this. Exaggerated health claims that included a lack of clarity on exactly how effective or reasons why they worked were liberally promoted. The tone of informed journalists helps a resort to manufacture the desired image in the public eye (Funnell 1983:18).

The popularity of Atlantic City was dependent upon transportation, which was incorporated into the original plan, as well as upon patronage by the large population of Philadelphia. People could leave behind the industry and discipline of everyday life and escape to leisure and pleasure, if only for the day. It created the illusion of social mobility and increased contact between the sexes. Serenity, regarded as a virtue at other resorts, was not to be found in Atlantic City, where the benches faced the city, not the beach. Additionally, the success was dependent upon the seasonal black labor force (Funnell 1983:14).

Atlantic City, after its struggle to become a national resort, experienced a conflict between pleasure and corruption as organized crime, prostitution, and the atrocities of the



city's government flourished. Transportation was discontinued first by the railroad. Only a small percentage of the lower classes continued to frequent the resort. The modern middle class finds it difficult to believe that Atlantic City once had appeal to their class, so they have decided it must have been different (Funnell 1983:143, 145).

The myth exists that Atlantic City was once a showcase of elegance and the playground for the cream of society. A similar myth exists for the resorts of Old Point Comfort. There is a tendency to see resorts as ceasing to do something which once made them successful or as starting something which ended their success. However, their vanished splendors and lost magnificence are the results rather than the causes of the fall and decline of resorts in general.

### The Decline of Resorts

The Civil War had a devastating effect on the resort culture of Old Point Comfort. It reemerged to gain fame only to be struck down by the obsolescence of its facility. The Hotel Chamberlin carried the torch of popularity until it was ruined by fire. The Chamberlin Hotel arose from its ashes only to be confronted with the decline of resorts.

Cleveland Amory (1948:23) bases his theory of the evolution and eventual demise of a resort on the premise that groups come to resorts in a certain order. First on the scene

are the artists and writers in search of good scenery and solitude. They are shortly followed by professors and clergymen and other so-called "solid people," on long vacations in search of the "simple life." Nice millionaires in search of a good place for their children to lead the simple life, as lived by the solid people, arrive next. Naughty millionaires, who wish to associate with the nice millionaires, soon follow. They, however, build million-dollar cottages and million-dollar clubs, dress up for dinner, give balls and utterly destroy the simple life. The fifth group to arrive is simply termed "trouble." Although Amory's theory is facetiously stated, many of the elements are based in truth. The Amory theory is not readily applicable to the situation at Old Point Comfort where the location upon a military reservation precluded and controlled its growth and possibly its appeal, but, his theory does point out significant factors influencing the overall decline of the resort nationwide.

The expansion of sleeping quarters into separate structures was a common feature of many resorts, but this feature did not develop in the hotels at Old Point Comfort due to control by the military. At other resorts, tents often adorned the lawns. Eventually, the practice led to the construction of permanent cottages owned or rented by visitors. These cottages accommodated large families while allowing them the convenience of the main hotel building

nearby, which acted as a social center. In time, the separate cottages had little to do with the resort's hotel building. The increasing number of day excursionists, who arrived in the morning, spent the day, and returned home by evening, likewise had no use for hotel facilities. As the hotel trade was encroached upon, it attempted to fight back by with the addition of new conveniences and services (Klein 1978:39).

With a resort's success contingent upon accessibility of transportation, it is ironic that the resort eventually found increased mobility detrimental. The common availability of the automobile to the middle class not only greatly shortened its reign as a symbol of affluence and social position, but also affected resort trade to a large extent. Rather than staying at a resort and returning year after year, people began to prefer touring from place to place. This eradicated the much needed return trade that had created a diverse but stable patronage. The automobile was accompanied by an increased interest in sports that many resorts, due to their locations, were unable to offer.

As the popularity of a resort area increased, often at risk were the very qualities which had attracted early patrons. Turmoil and agitation replaced serenity and peace, and undermined the exclusivity of a resort. At Old Point Comfort this was not the case; because of the nature of its location and close association with the Fort Monroe, there was a definite limit on its development. Other resorts lacked the

solidarity and traditions retained at Old Point Comfort through the military.

The turn of the century brought a decline in the number of rich and elite who kept "society" and, correspondingly, resorting alive. The fashionable people who had established the customs, set the pace, decreed the manners and supplied the tastes were ruled and conducted by women. Though often conducted with the same aggressive spirit of competition which their male counterparts displayed in business, this fashionable law making made no significant demands on their intelligence or talents. Matrons and debutantes grew impatient and bored with their ornamental roles as ideal "ladies." These roles as well as the rites and values embraced by "society" were attacked by feminists, suffragettes, and social revolutionaries. Though working class women were first to give support to these groups and their causes, it was noted that they were soon joined by "ladies of rank" (Raeburn 1976:16). While at first there were few elite defectors, they were shortly joined by dowagers the likes of Belmont and Astor, so highly positioned in society as to set a precedent. As ladies of breeding stepped down from their pedestals to interact with the everyday world, "society's" mystique and influence evaporated (Waller 1966:377). Consequently, in an attempt to cling to their established values, the rich clustered in little groups to keep their inferiors at a distance and took their snobbery to

new levels - not an enviable trait and soon thought ill of. Luxury hotels and resorts became viewed as great islands of impermanence and alienation - no longer a social or aesthetic ideal for the other classes to copy as barriers of race religion, money and family lineage reached an extreme. The principle reason for going to the resorts - because it was fashionable - was no longer valid (Waller 1966:327).

Although expanded to many in the middle class, the vacation experience was still limited, despite the claims of national participation. Overall the number of travellers was much smaller than today (Platt 1976:127). However, the vacation was pronounced in a railroad brochure as "chronic and confirmed among all classes." In 1910, President Taft declared that every individual needed a vacation of several months' duration. To determine the public attitude on vacations, a survey was conducted by The New York Times. "Big Employers of Labor and Men of Affairs" were featured, as one vice-president of the IRT subway stated, "the value of a vacation depends upon how far you go down the line. I am a great believer in vacations and very liberal ones for men who work under mental strain. But it is different with the man whose work is merely physical work." In the pre-war twentieth century, the concept of a vacation as a basic right for workers struck bosses as an unreasonable luxury (Blackmar 1979:86-87).

The usual life span for a hotel is 50 years due to the changing character of a location. Many of the resort hotels, having been built in the 1870's, were approaching a natural end by the 1920's. The technological marvels once available only at hotels were now part of everyday life. Chiefly, it is believed that it was this progress in mechanization that caused old hotels to fail after World War I (Williamson 1930:260). However, the resort industry was to be most severely shaken by the social and economic changes to come.

The economic prosperity of the 1920's was accompanied by non-conformity in the social setting, often taken to the limits of bizarre and revolutionary behavior, although some scholars believe this claim is exaggerated. It was admitted by F. Scott Fitzgerald in 1931 that the concept of the "Jazz Age" was limited to the "upper one-tenth of the nation" (Davis 1972:17). The rest of the nation was occupied with Prohibition and a call for moral reform. Traditional values were sought out and reflected by the colonial revival architectural style which was applied to everything from gas stations to grocery stores (Cromley 1979:28).

The economic prosperity produced one of the greatest hotel construction booms in American history. Encouraged by occupancies exceeding 85 percent in 1920, hundreds of hotels were built - nearly 100 alone in the period from 1927 to 1930 (Southeastern Virginia Planning District Commission 1988:31).

The Chamberlin Hotel, built during this surge, was an interesting blend of the ideals of the time, as well as many lingering pre-World War I attitudes. The luxury and comfort that had always marked the resort was combined with modern decoration. The vestiges of the veranda remained in the form of a patio. The great size of the hotel once again created a landmark on the coastal horizon.

The placement of guest rooms and public spaces was now standardized, showing the thoughtful planning which went into the arrangement of hotel space. This permitted the use of many architectural styles, although hotels of this time more often resemble a box or U-shape with decorations applied. In a resort setting, however, the value of a distinctive style was important to attract guests.

The appropriateness of the use of historical themes, such as the colonial style used at the Chamberlin Hotel, was later questioned in a building that was to function in a modern way. For, by this time, services and operations had been standardized and mechanized to a high degree of sophistication. Eventually the matter was settled, as styles gave way to a sleek, modern, no-frills look, leaving historical-themed buildings looking quite dated (Limerick et al. 1979:166).

The Chamberlin Hotel was designed to appeal to those benefitting from the wealth of the decade and represented the prosperity of the local community as well. It opened just as

the country fell into a deep economic depression. The concept of leisure was stranded as a social structure as it was totally incongruous with the Depression era's high unemployment and meager resources. Resorting never again achieved the widespread popularity or status it once held.

With investment capital gone, construction was halted during the Depression. Railroads cut back services leaving many resorts isolated. Others were left to struggle through the hard times. Typical of many resorts during the Depression, the Homestead found it difficult to keep up the standards and keep the facility open. Japanese internees were housed there during World War II (Ingalls 1949:61). It was never quite the same. The physical plant of resorts was largely ignored during this time and called for vast renovations to operate again - adding to the difficulty. Many resorts closed part-time and many closed never to reopen - nearly 85 percent went bankrupt between 1930 and 1935 (Southeastern Virginia Planning Commission 1988:31). What once represented the millionaires' mecca now stood as ghost towns. Those which survived, like the Homestead, were never able to capture their former glory.

After the hard Depression years, resorts were seen as representative of a corrosive materialism and vulgarity of affluence. The resorts responded by shifting from suppliers of luxury to suppliers of activity. Country clubs had arisen to provide the class distinctions once available at the



resort. Resorts by necessity were no longer the domains of the rich, and they attempted to broaden their appeal and attract more informal and numerous clients (Limerick et al. 1979:169).

Unions concentrated on gaining increased wages and benefits for workers after the Depression; and in time, vacations became a significant part of the benefits under contract agreements. After the Civil War leisure had expanded but was limited. Now the emergence of mass leisure after the Depression was the most radical change in working-class lives in the twentieth century (Parker 1971:7). As a result, there was a new class of budget travelers, which sought less expensive, more convenient, on-the-road lodgings.

The automobile, and later the airplane, made other forms of transportation seem unsophisticated and out-of-date. The resort sought to cater to these more mobile and transient guests; however, many of the more isolated resorts were not on major highways. The resort also began to expand its services to the convention and business trade, which served to generate a greater amount of business and made up the profit-loss difference. Especially appealing to the convention trade was the self-contained nature of the resort, creating controlled attendance at meetings (Hepburn 1965:xvi-xvii).

The hotel industry was revived after World War II when the massive relocation of military personnel and industrial

workers caused occupancies to exceed 90 percent. Little construction took place when resources were devoted to the war effort. Following the war, however, an explosion occurred in automobile travel, as the national highway system was expanded. New lodging facilities were needed to accommodate the growth of travel in new locations, along highways - not across the street from downtown railroad stations (Southeastern Virginia Planning District Commission 1988:31).

From 1948 to 1978, the United States lost more than 15,000 hotels, a reduction from 29,650 to 12,538. Within the once opulent hotels one found chipped paint, broken tiles, painted-over marble, facades covered in plastic, and sloppy service (Magida and Herbert 1983:19). The new type of lodging to emerge as a replacement was the motel. Motels were built along highways, usually outside of towns where land was cheap. They were located to serve the automobile traveler and offered free parking, lower rates, and a less formal atmosphere (Southeastern Virginia Planning District Commission 1988:31), although they often were boringly functional and aweless when compared to those of the past.

The resort hotel of the nineteenth century, with room access from veranda, was stylistically similar to the developing motel. The motel designed for the motor traveler was modeled on ranch buildings of the Spanish tradition of the Southwest (Cromley 1979:21). It is horizontal and usually only one room deep with the porch providing access to the

chamber. This creates an independence so that in effect the motel is something halfway between a cottage and hotel. Yet, despite the stylistic similarities, a motel is actually antithetical to a resort hotel. As the resort hotel strives to be all-satisfying, the motel encourages moving on rather than permanence (Cromley 1979:22).

By 1949, 90 percent of those workers covered by union agreements had two-week paid vacations. Automobile ownership continued to increased as did motel construction (Harris 1979:106). Physical changes were necessary to keep hotels competitive. The suburban ideal of air-conditioning was incorporated in the 1950's as were various other attempts at modernization. Some evidence of the original resort remained. In many modern resorts, the glassed-in veranda has taken the shape of glass corridors which serve to connect the various separate parts of the establishment. Decks and balconies, which now adorn many commercial establishments and homes as well, are also remnants of the veranda (Cromley 1979:18).

By 1950, "society" was a thing of the past (Amory 1948:5). Specific socio-economic variables were influencing the United States lodging industry. The population was on the increase, and its centers shifted dramatically toward the Sunbelt and Western states. Families traveled more often to maintain family contacts. With increased income and leisure time there was a movement towards expanded pleasure travel as well (Southeastern Virginia Planning Commission 1988:32). A

national network of high-speed roads allowed for quicker and cheaper transportation and contributed to a spectacular rise in tourism (Architects' Journal 1970:7).

Family affluence became widespread during the 1960's as several million families could afford the time and money to visit a resort in spite of the expense. The major concerns facing travelers during this time were accommodations for children, parking, and pre-packaged concepts. Resorts began to devote themselves to the provision of these needs. In the resort days of the nineteenth century children did not usually attend the resort simply because it was not always know what to do with them except to put them outside. As did other resorts, the Chamberlin Hotel incorporated children into its advertising and services making it possible to take the children who could have separate activities and meals. Parking lots replace areas once used for private railroad cars that frequented resorts in a by-gone era and imaginative tours, often based on a theme, were promoted.

As opposed to catering to the need to see and to be seen, resorts now attempted to offer a break in routine for the worker and a sense of anonymity, though in a club-like atmosphere. The setting changed as well to adopt this new role. The outdoor pool of the present Chamberlin Hotel is situated within the embrace of the hotel and is overlooked by decks and terraces. The hotel poolside in effect is similar to the suburban backyard. Facing the back, shielded from the

public, the separateness of the family is increased, as the privacy and unity of the resort family is preserved (Cromley 1979:18).

The construction of the interstate highway system created the primary medium by which the population traveled. The Chamberlin was situated close to the arrival point of the ferry which connected the Lower Peninsula with Norfolk. However, the hotel was later bypassed with the construction of Interstate 64 and the completion of the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel in 1957. The increase of air travel dramatically changed the nature of the resort industry as well. Travel time was reduced and length of stays were correspondingly shortened. Because this also allowed for more frequent business opportunities, many new destinations were opened up and many towns and cities ventured into the convention business (Southeastern Virginia Planning Commission 1988:32).

It is no longer believed that summer is the only season for vacations; they are now considered "boundless." The mini-vacation, not the long stay, has become the norm, further aided by an increase in package deals. It is interesting to note the change in the operational plan of the resort. The long run of the American plan ended and was replaced by the European as stays shortened; but it was eventually reincorporated through the package deal.

The recent emancipation of the young, as they increased their earnings and have fewer family responsibilities, has once again made conspicuous consumption and resorts fashionable, but not in the sense that they once were. Where once people escaped to the mountains and sea, now it is to the islands or the cruise ship. The springs and their mineral properties are still there but the faith in them has gone. Many feel the rigors of today's "complex" lifestyles cannot be simply allieviated by domestic, obsolete resorts and require more sophisticated measures. Confidence is instead place in vitamins, self-help books, and exotic locales.

## **Conclusion and Summary**

By design, resorts are constructed to reflect the needs of a particular time, place, and expectation of clientele. Like all buildings, they mirror their time as embodiments of American values. As such they provide a cross section of American social, cultural, and architectural traits.

Architectural styles used in resort hotel structures and changes to existing structures were reflective of the ideals of specific time periods. More specifically, these changes reflected the ideals of certain economic sectors of the population to whom access to the resort was limited. This access was contingent upon wealth and the availability of leisure time, factors which many aspired to yet relatively few attained. As such, the resort further prevailed upon the class distinctions of American society.

Incorporated into the infrastructure of the resort's success were transportation, service, and accommodation. A delicate balance between the serving of guests handsomely by catering to their everchanging needs and the rendering of a profit to the owners was precariously maintained in order for the resort to continue. Consequently, the fashion-conscious

character created a fickle patronage and made the resort vulnerable to financial disaster. Those that survived did so by being able to accommodate the changes in fashion, taste, social mores, and economic conditions.

The resort culture exhibited by the hotels of Old Point Comfort while accomodating these factors, developed as an interplay between the physical buildings, the site, their users, and their respective times. Though the first of the four hotels, Hygeia Hotel (1821-1862), was little more than a 16-room cabin when it opened for the benefit of workmen, the military, and curiosity seekers brought by the construction of Fort Monroe, it proved popular and was quickly expanded. Each of the various ownerships and managements of the hotel contributed to further enlargements and refinements in accommodations inspired by the city hotel. With each improvement, the establishment moved closer to achieving the luxuries of a first-class hostelry of the time such as might be enjoyed only by the wealthy. This restrictive condition had long been upheld at the health retreat where a similar clientele was likewise catered to.

Originally centers for health seekers, health retreats were founded in emulation of the spa tradition of European aristocracy. However, in time their role changed to that of social centers for discussing business and politics, pursuing romance, and relief from boredom. This emergence of the social setting, the transforming impetus to the resort, was



especially important to the fashion conscious Southern gentry. The owners and management of the Hygeia Hotel, while not ignoring the continuing patronage of the military, sought to attract this group by offering a diverse array of amusements and recreations in addition to the health-related facilities. The convenient location and climate made Old Point Comfort and the Hygeia Hotel a favorite of Washington's political figures. The return patronage of the combination of government officials, military, and southern aristocracy founded the social element of Old Point Comfort.

In addition to the reputation of its patrons, competition based on the attributes of the site was keen among resorts. Architectural form was directly influenced by the manner and tastes of the public and so provided yet another way for resorts to set themselves apart from others as well as keep abreast of changing fashion. This form of display was most recognizable at the Hygeia Hotel with the adoption of the popular Greek Revival style used in the Tremont House in Boston, creating basically a reiteration of the city hotel in a natural setting.

In addition to destroying the early resort culture of Old Point Comfort, the exigencies of the Civil War created national economic hardships. Industrialism emerged as the predominant force in American life after the Civil War offering a relief to economic problems. The overall economic growth widened the gap between the rich and the poor, creating

an expansive middle class. Industrialism likewise provided the impetus for the growth of transportation. As America became a more mobile society, it was noted that leisure and recreation occupied a place of greater importance than ever before in the lives of the great mass of people. The average middle-class citizen was possessed of sufficient time and money to enable them to gratify their desire to seek diversions. This growth of leisure and expansion to the middle-class further transformed the resort. Many aspired to the mode of recreation formerly attained only by the rich - resorting. Numerous resorts emerged and flourished as they specifically catered to the middle-class as they sought to emulate the rich. It was under such conditions that the successor to the Hygeia Hotel, bearing the same name, was to emerge and become a symbol of southern enterprise and self-sufficiency.

Viewed as an essential counterpart to work necessary for physical and mental well-being, the vacation experience so many sought to aspire to offered a opportunity to escape the rigors of daily life. While early resort goers enjoyed the freedom of movement and activity, by the 1870's, there were specific ceremonies and social rituals of an increasingly sophisticated middle-class American society which were played out in the resort. Resorts were a stage for promenades, cotillions, and courtships and subject to the rigid etiquette allied by the Victorian period. This change in function

exemplifies the very nature of the resort - susceptible to and contingent upon change as brought about by changing attitudes.

As the ideals of the upper middle-class shifted so did the activities and corresponding architectural forms. Though subject to localized influences and a sense of individuality, resorts having shared similar cultural influences likewise shared common elements. The public attraction to novelty, fashion, extravagance, and comfort was represented in resorts by the use of varied architectural styles and technological advancements, continued enlargements, and the overall great size of the establishments. The hallmark of the resort was of course, the veranda.

Having undergone a seemingly constant series of expansions as influenced by the travels of Harrison Phoebus, the Hygeia Hotel (1863-1902) incorporated national trends in resort architecture, services, accommodations, and recreations. The result was a variably storied wooden structure boasting 1000 rooms providing the latest in amenities and an overall tone of sophistication.

As the Hygeia Hotel's superior reputation grew and modes of transportation improved and expanded, increasing numbers of the upper middle-class were introduced to the healthy, wholesome, and entertaining delights of Old Point Comfort. The hotel was host to variety of important persons but high society, whose interests fell elsewhere, eluded its grasp. Though its ability to constantly adapt to change had allowed

the facility to sustain its fame, the structure could not keep pace with the advancements in the resort industry rendering it passe.

The Hotel Chamberlin (1896-1920) embodied the resort era at its peak. Fairytale-like in character with its Chateausque motif, the Hotel Chamberlin formed an imposing site on the edge of Hampton Roads as it summoned patrons in search of an idyllic experience. Its juxtaposition to the Hygeia Hotel offered a remarkable contrast and illustrated the incorporation of technological advancements as well as the concrete expression of new attitudes receiving public favor.

On the exterior, both of the Hygeia Hotels had an openness to their rambling sprawl, while in contrast the Hotel Chamberlin was vertical, compact, and enclosed. Changes in the public opinion toward nature and landscape were exhibited in the architectural plan. Windows served as architectural decoration while enclosed porches provided views and allowed a passive rather than active interaction with the natural environment. Instead, an attempt was made to recreate natural settings indoors through the use of plants and lighting. The resorter still sought out the resort under the guise of health and the Hotel Chamberlin offered a continuation and refinement of the practices long established by its predecessors.

The Hotel Chamberlin met with an unfortunate end and its absence was felt emotionally, physically, and economically

throughout the local area. It was proposed that a successor, the Chamberlin Hotel be built as a luxury hotel designed to attract and accommodate the wealthy. This concept, however, was never to be fully realized.

Physically, the Chamberlin Hotel bears little resemblance to the past hotels. The symmetrical tone of the architecture and the use of bricks as construction material is solemn. However, the use of the Georgian style in the structure does present a similarity to the usage of the Greek Revival style of the Hygeia Hotel (1821-1862). As interpretations of past styles, both styles reflect their contemporary popularity and offered charm reminiscent of the "idyllic" past. This appeal was in contrast to the cosmopolitan atmosphere attempting to be achieved inside. Ironically, the "modern" Chamberlin Hotel bore a marked resemblance to the city office buildings many sought to escape and so seemed out of place - a city hotel transplanted to a provincial setting.

National economic problems caused tremendous financial difficulties for the owners of the Chamberlin Hotel, a problem that was to plague the hotel over the years. Consequentially, its ability to function as a resort was sporadic. Other influences upon this issue were the corresponding social changes that eroded the public sector for which the hotel was designed. The structure was isolated from mass appeal as the popularity of resorting declined. For years it sought to survive by fulfilling other functions rather than relying

solely on its intended service. With modernization it is seeking to find its long alluded niche.

As demonstrated by the hotels of Old Point Comfort, the cyclical nature of resort popularity parallels times of economic prosperity, as it extends to surplus wealth and leisure time. In times of war, widespread disease, and economic depression, resorts do not prosper and so appear to be viable only in "good times."

The economic prosperity of the last decade has once again popularized resorting. Resorts are still used by those of the proper means, a much expanded sector, for similar purposes - relaxation, entertainment, and an escape from reality. The lingering shadow of some health related benefits even prevails. However, Americans now choose to escape from reality and be entertained geographically further and further away. In addition, many of the activities once exclusive to resorts are now part of everyday life.

The time-worn Chamberlin Hotel fails to meet the needs of the present resorting population. It offers a heavy elegance in an era when many find the homogeneity of hotel chains more comforting and acceptable and are seduced by the exotic lure of faraway places. However, illusions created and perpetuated by the fame and popularity of the past hotels enshrine and elevate the reputation of the Chamberlin Hotel to a similar status. These virtues are actually local myth for the hotel does not approach the position held by its

predecessors. In fact, the Chamberlin Hotel never realized its intended purpose. Yet through these associations, the Chamberlin Hotel stands as a monument to the legacies of the past hotels and as a symbol to the social and cultural ideals of times past.

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